Church-Government AND Church-Covenant DISCVSSED,

In an Anſwer of the Elders of the ſeverall Churches in *NEW-ENGLAND* To two and thirty Queſtions, ſent over to them by divers Miniſters in *England*, to declare their judgments therein.

Together with an Apologie of the ſaid Elders in *New-England* for Church-Covenant, ſent over in Anſwer to Maſter *Bernard* in the yeare 1639.

As alſo in an Anſwer to nine Poſitions about Church-Government.

And now publiſhed for the ſatisfaction of all who deſire reſolution in thoſe points.

LONDON,
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To the READER.

IT is not hard to believe that such discourses as this wil meet with divers censures, the prophane and ignorant loathing Christ, and any thing concerning him; the Formalist accounting such truths troublesom that may ingage him in the change of his opinions and practises, and some of the wisest will be apt to question the tyming such light as this: yea doubtles this pamphlet-glutted age will so looke upon it, and lay it by.

But because I doe conceive that this sword will not be sheath'd which is now drawn, till Church-work be better known, and more countenanced, and since safety is laid up in the Temple, Psa. 27. 3,4,5. I could not but help on this, which attended and practised may prove our security next to Christ. These were either sudden answers to our doubting and inquiring Brethren, or some satisfaction rendred about our so much slighted Church-Covenant, which wee could not but thinke might come to view, for the present stay to some faithfull soules, that call for light, and intend to use it well: for others, of what kind soever, we must beare their harder thoughts, among those usuall loads of scandals, that men of our judgement must carry, especially if zeale for the Truth draw them forth to publike observation; nor doe we purpose (God helping us) to succumbe under calumny, being the livery of quieter times then these, let us bee viler still, so God and his Arke may be more glorious. Yet this I doe professe for my selfe and Brethren that as we have not bin dealt with, nor convinc'd of any offence, so we shall ever be ready to give an account of that hope which is in us, being call'd thereunto; in the meane time we over looke these barkings of black mouthes, and wish a good Comment be made upon the text of our plaine meaning.

The onely way I know to reach Gods mind in Worship will bee to love the truth for it's owne sake: yea to love it when it shall condemne our practises and persons also: Who hath not observed that the first step to error is the declining the truth in love to it?

Hence

Hence Popery begat her first brat, and hath nurst it up with the same milke; we would earnestly desire that none would call that unseasonable or unreasonable, which God seemes even now to call for, at the calling of this Synode, and will carry so much Reason with it, as God and his truth will owne; more tendernes and respect to our Brethren we know not how to shew, who sent us these 32. Questions, no other dealing would we have from our brethren not consenting with us. Some Rivers have bin noted to differ in the colours of the water, yet running in the same Channell: let Jesus Christ be lifted up by us all; let us love him whil'st wee dispute about him.

Presbytery and Independency (as it is cal'd) are the wayes of Worship and Church fellowship, now looked at, since (we hope) Episcopacy is Coffind out, and will be buried without expectation of another resurrection. We are much charged with what we own not, viz: Independency, when as we know not any Churches Reformed, more looking at sister Churches for helpe then ours doe, onely we cannot have rule yet discovered from any friend or enemy, that we should be under Canon, or power of any other Church; under their Councell we are. We need not tell the wise whence Tyranny grew in Churches, and how common wealths got their pressure in the like kind.

These be our sighs and hearty wishes, that selfe may be conquered in this poore Nation, which shuts the doore against these truths. Know (good Reader) we do not hereby go about to whistle thee out of any known good way of God. Commonly Questions and Answers cleare up the way, when other Treatises leave us to darknes. Read them, and what we say for a Church-Covenant, it may save charge and time in reading other Bookes, remember wee strive not here for masteryes, but give an account of our practise, wherein if thou know'st we faile Candidus imperti; *if we agree let us worke by our plat-forme; and may thy soule flourish as a greene heath or watered garden. So prayeth*

Thine heartily

H. PETER.

THE XXXII QUESTIONS STATED.

1. WHether the greateſt part of the Engliſh there (by eſtimation) be not as yet unadmitted to any Congregation among you, and the Reaſons thereof?

2. What things doe you hold to be Eſſentiall and abſolutely neceſſary to the being of a true Viſible Church of Chriſt?

3. Whether doe you not hold all Viſible Believers to bee within the Viſible Church as Members thereof, and not without in the Apoſtles ſence; 1 Cor. 5. and therefore ought ſo to be acknowledged, and accepted in all Congregations whereſoever they ſhall come, and are ſo knowne: and ought (if they deſire, and be not otherwiſe unfit) of right to be permitted to partake in all Gods ordinances and Church priviledges there, ſo farre as they perſonally concerne themſelves, although they be not as yet fixed Members in particular Covenant, either with that Congregation where for the preſent they reſide, nor with any other?

4. Whether you doe not hold that Baptiſme rightly (for ſub-

ſubſtance) partaked doth make them that are ſo Baptized, Members of the Viſible Church: and ſo to have right (at leaſt quoad nos) to all the priviledges thereof (ſo farre as they are otherwiſe fit) untill they be caſt out (if they ſo deſerve) by Excommunication.

5. *Whether doe you not admit Children under age as Members of the Church, together with, and in the Admiſſion of their Parent or Parents: So as thenceforth they may partake of all Church priviledges (being otherwiſe fit) without any other perſonall profeſſion of Faith, or entring into Church Covenant, when they ſhall come to yeares? and how long doe you count them under age?*

6. *Whether do not you admit Orphants under age, with and in their Guardians?*

7. *Whether doe you admit or refuſe Children under age only according to the preſent eſtate of their neareſt Parents? Or doe you not admit them if any of their next Anceſtors before their parents were believers?*

8. *Whether doe you require of all perſons of age, whom you admit Members of any Church?*

1. *A publike vocall declaration of the manner and ſoundneſſe of their converſion?*

2. *A publike profeſſion of their faith concerning the Articles of Religion.*

3. *An expreſſe verball covenanting to walke with the ſaid Church in particular, in Church fellowſhip.*

4. *And not to depart from the ſaid Church afterward without the conſent thereof: or how doe you hold and practiſe in theſe things?*

9. *Whether doe you hold all, or the moſt of our* Pariſh *aſſemblies in* Old-England *to be true Viſible Churches of Chriſt; with which you may lawfully joyne in every part of Gods true worſhip (if occaſion ſerved thereto:) or if not all or the moſt, then*

then what ones are thoſe of which you ſo account, and with which you durſt ſo partake or joyne; and in what reſpects? And why be not the reſt ſuch as well as they?

10. *If you hold that any of our pariſhionall Aſſemblies are true Viſible Churches, and that the Members thereof are all, or ſome of them (at leaſt) members of true viſible Churches, then whether will you permit ſuch members (at leaſt) as are either famouſly knowne to your ſelves to be godly, or doe bring ſufficient Teſtimoniall thereof from others that are ſo knowne, or from the Congregation it ſelfe whereof they were members here, to partake with you in all the ſame Ordinances, and parts of Gods true worſhip in any of your Congregations (as by occaſion they may be there) in the ſame manner, and with the like liberty, as you would permit any that might happily come unto you from any of the Churches of* Geneva, France, *the* Low-Countreyes, *or yet from any one Church to another among your ſelves: Suppoſe from ſome Church about* Connecticut, *or that of* Plimouth, *&c. Vnto the Church at* Boſton, New-Towne, Dorcheſter, *&c. Or if not, what may be the Reaſon thereof?*

11. *Whether doe you hold our preſent ſtanding in our Pariſh Aſſemblies here in* Old ENGLAND, *to bee lawfull and ſafe to be continued in, or how farre it may be ſo?*

12. *Whether doe you hold that every Believer is alwayes bound to joyne himſelfe as a fixed Member to ſome one particular Congregation, ſo as if he doe not, and ſo oft and ſo long as he doth it not, ſo oft and ſo long he is without the Church in the Apoſtles ſence,* 1 Cor. 5. *as an Heathen or Publican, out of the Kingdome of Chriſt, and poſſibility of ſalvation, according to that maxime in divinity,* Extra Eccleſiam non eſt ſalus.

13. *VVhether doe you thinke it lawfull and convenient that a company of private and illitterate perſons (into a Church body combined) ſhould themſelves ordinarily examine, elect,*

ordaine, and depose their owne Ministers of the word, without the assistance of any other Ministers of other Churches, where the same may be had?

14. Whether doe you hold that every small Company of seaven, or nine, or twenty, or fourty persons, combined into a Church body, be such a Church (as by the ordinance of Christ) hath, and ought to have all power, and exercise of Church Government: So as they may transact all Ecclesiasticall businesses independently among st themselves?

15. Whether do you give the exercise of all Church power of Government to the whole Church, or to the Presbiters thereof alone? and if to those, then we desire to know what act of Government, and Superior authority (properly so called) may the Presbiters doe, more then any other member may doe, or without the particular consent of the rest, wee crave to have those particular Acts mentioned: and how, and over whom in those Acts the Presbiters doe rule (in propriety of speaking) more then the rest of the Congregation doe?

16. Whether doe you not permit Women to Vote in Church matters?

17. Whether in Voting doe the Major part alwayes, or at any time, carry Ecclesiasticall matters with you, or in what things doth it, in what not?

18. What meanes have you to preserve your Churches in Vnity and Verity, or to correct or reduce any Church erring in Doctrine or practice. As,

1. Whether you have any plat-form of Doctrine and Discipline agreed upon; or if you have not, whether meane you to have one, and when; and thinke you it lawfull and expedient so to have?

2. Whether have you combined your selves together into Classes, or purpose so to doe, so as to doe no weighty matter without their counsell and consent?

3. Or

3. *Or give you any power to Synods and Councells to determine and order things that cannot otherwise be ended, so as that their determination ſhall bind the particular Churches ſo aſſembled to due obedience, in caſe they decree nothing but according to Truth and right, and to peaceable ſuffering, in caſe they ſhould doe otherwiſe? Or what other courſe you have, or intend to have for that end aforeſaid?*

19. *Whether hold you, that each particular Church may lawfully make ſuch Laws or Orders Eccleſiaſticall for the Government of it ſelfe, and the Members thereof; for decency, order, and Edification, as ſhall oblige all her Members, and may not be omitted without ſinne?*

20. *Wherein hold you that the whole Eſſence of a Miniſters calling doth conſiſt: As* 1. *whether is Election by the People it, yea or no? Or* 2. *is it ſo Eſſentiall, as that without it, the Miniſters calling is a meere nullity? Or* 3. *is Ordination as Eſſentiall a part thereof, as the Peoples Election? Or* 4. *is it but a meer formality and ſolemnity of their calling?*

21. *Whether doe you hold it lawfull for meer lay or private men to ordaine Miniſters in any caſe?*

22. *What Eſſentiall difference put you between the Office of Paſtor and Teacher, and doe you obſerve the ſame difference inviolably; and do not your Teachers by vertue of that Office give themſelves uſually to application of doctrine as, well as your Paſtours? and do they not alſo uſually apply the Seales?*

23. *What authority or Eminency have your Preaching Elders, above your ſole Ruling Elders, or are they both equalls?*

24. *Whether may a Miniſter of one congregation (being thereto requeſted) do as a Miniſter any act of his Miniſtery (as Preach, Baptize, Adminiſter the Lords Supper, Ordain, &c. in and unto other Congregations beſides his owne?*

25. *Whether hold you that a Miniſter of a Congregation,*

leaving or loosing his place (suppose without his fault) doe withall lose both Nomen *and* Esse *of his ministery, and do become a meere Lay, or private man, untill he be a new elected, and ordained?*

26. *Whether doe you allow, or thinke it lawfull to allow and settle any certain & stinted maintenance upon your Ministers?*

27. *Whether doe you permit and call upon meer Lay and private men (neither being in the ministerie nor intended to it) ordinarily to preach or Prophecie publiquely, in, and before the Congregation? and whether thinke you that prophecying mentioned,* 1 Cor. 14. *be to be understood of such, and be an ordinary and standing order of God in the Church?*

28. *Whether doe you allow and call upon your people publiquely before all the Congregation to propound Questions, move doubts, & argue with their ministers of matters delivered either by them or others, either at the same, or some other time?*

29. *Whether hold you that the conversion of sinners to God is ordinarily the proper fruit and effect of the word Preached, by a* Minister *alone, and that by vertue of his Office alone, or that it is alike common to ministers, and Lay persons, so they be gifted to preach?*

30. *Whether all and every of your Churches (including* Plimouth, &c.) *do precisely observe the same course both in Constitution and Government of themselves?*

31. *Whether would you permit any Companie of* Ministers *and People (being otherwise in some measure approvable) to sit downe by you, and set up and practise another forme of Discipline, enioying like libertie with your selves in the Commonwealth, and accepted as a sister Church by the rest of your Churches?*

32. *Whether hold you it lawfull to use any set forms of Prayer in publique or private, as the Lords prayer and others, either made by himselfe that useth the same, or else by some other man?*

THE

THE ANSWERS TO THE Aforegoing QUESTIONS.

The first Question Answered.

ALL the Engliſh and others alſo are freely admitted to be preſent in our Congregations, at the reading of the Scriptures, and expoſition thereof (which is wont alwayes to goe along therewith) at the preaching of the word, ſinging of Pſalmes, Prayers, Admitting of Members, and diſpencing of Cenſures; And many alſo are admitted to Church Communion, and ſo to partake in Church Ordinances and priviledges, as Sacraments, power of Election, Cenſures, *&c.* though many alſo there are who are not yet admitted to this Church Communion. But whether is the greater number, thoſe that are admitted hereunto, or thoſe that are not we cannot certainly tell? But in the Churches in the Bay, where moſt of us are beſt acquainted, we may truely ſay, that for the heads of Families, thoſe that are admitted are farre more in number then the other: beſides whom there are likewiſe ſundry children

dren and Servants that are Admitted also. And for the Reasons why many are not yet received to Church Communion, they are sundry. 1. Many are not admitted because they are not yet knowne. Every yeare hitherto God hath replenished the Country with many new commers, and these at the first are not suddainly taken in, as Members of Churches, till by time there have been some triall of them, and better occasion to know them what they are. Sometimes once a yeare there are in the Land many hundreds, and some thousands of this sort. 2. When by time they come to be knowne, many do appeare to be carnall, and give no Testimony of being Members of Christ, and therefore if they should offer themselves to be Members of Churches the Churches would not see Warrant to receive them, because the Church is the body of Christ. 3. Some that are Godly do of their own accord for a time forbeare to offer themselves, till they be better acquainted with the Church and Ministry where they intend to joyne, and with the wayes in which the Churches walke in this Country, and and till they be better informed what are the duties of Church Members. 4. Those that are knowne to be Godly, are all admitted in some Church or other presently, upon their own desire, when they offer themselves thereto: except any have given offence by walking (in any particular, in their Conversation) otherwise then becomes the Gospell; and then such are to give satisfaction to them to whom they have given offence, by acknowledgeing their offence, and shewing repentance for it, and then they are Admitted.

To. 2. It is one thing what Churches ought to be by the appointment of Jesus Christ, another, what weakneſse and swervings from his appointment, he may beare withall for a time, before he renounce and cast off a People from being his Church. In respect of the former our Answer is, That when a Visible Church is to be errected, planted or constituted, by the Appointment of Christ, it is necessary that the matter of it, in regard of quality, should be Saints by calling,

calling, Visible Christians and Believers, 1 *Cor.* 1.2. *Eph.* 1.1. And in respect of Quantity no more in number in the dayes of the New Testament, but so many as may meet in one Congregation. 1 *Cor.* 11.20 & 14.23. *Acts* 14.27. & 15.22 30. And the forme, a gathering together of these visible Christians, a combining and uniting of them into one body, by the bond of an holy Covenant, for which we refer you to the Apolgie of the Churches in *N. E.* sent the last yeare in way of Answer to Mr. *Bernard.* For the latter we deny not, but visible Churches rightly constituted at the first, may degenerate, and great corruptions may grow therein, both in respect of matter and forme, and likewise in respect of their walking and Administrations, and yet the Lord in his patience may beare long with them, before he give them a Bill of Divorce, and make them *Lo-ammi*, not a People; as the example of the Church of Israel in the old Testament. Of the Church of *Corinth*, the Churches of *Galatia*, the 7 Churches of *Asia*, and others in the New Testament, doe abundantly manifest. But what degrees of corruption may be, before the soule as it were, and life, and being of a Church be destroyed, is hard for us precisely and punctually to determine; or to say thus farre a Church may erre, and yet remaine a Church; but if it proceed any further, then it ceaseth to be a Church any more; onely in the generall this we observe, the Lord doth not presently cast off a Church or give them a Bill of Divorce, no not for fundamentall errors in Doctrine, or Idolatry in Worship, or Tyranny in Government, till after obstinate and rebellious rejection of Reformation, and the meanes thereof: for all these were found in the Church of *Israel* when they crucified Christ, yet the Apostles rejected them not, till after the light of *Paul* offered, and blasphemously rejected, *Acts* 13.45.46. But if your selves have so Studied this point as to have ripened and formed thoughts therein, we should gladly receive light from you.

We do not know any visible Church of the *N. T.* pro- *To*: 3.

perly ſo called, but onely a particular Congregation; and therefore when this Queſtion in the firſt and laſt clauſe of it ſpeakes of Believers within the viſible Church as Members thereof, although they be not Members of that particular Congregation, where for the preſent they reſide, nor of any other: this ſpeech ſeemes to us according to our apprehenſion to imply a contradiction. They that are within the viſible Church as Members thereof, muſt needs be Members of ſome particular Congregation, becauſe all viſible Churches are Congregationall, as Mr. *Baine* ſheweth at large from the Church of *Antioch*, *Act.* 14. 27. the Church at *Corinth*, 1 *Cor.* 11. & 14. and other examples and Reaſons with Anſwers to the objections to the contrary in his *Diocef. Triall Queſt.* 1. Whereto we referre you in this Point; neither is he alone in this Tenent, for Mr. *Parker*, and many other teach the ſame. Thoſe ſilenced and deprived Miniſters that wrote the Booke called, *The Chriſtian and modeſt offer of Diſputation*, laying downe 16. Propoſitions which they offer to maintaine againſt the Prelats, give this for the fourth of them *viz.* *There is no true viſible Church of Chriſt, but a particular ordinary Congregation onely.*

Doubtleſſe every true viſible Church hath power from Chriſt to exerciſe Excommunication and other Ordinances of Chriſt, ſo that they proceed therein according to the Rules of the word, 1 *Cor.* 5. 4. 5. *Mat.* 18. 17. Now Dr. *Whitakers* ſheweth againſt *Bellarmine*, that Excommunication belongs not to the univerſall Church, but onely to a particular Congregation. *Qui juſtè excommunicantur*, ſaith he, *eo, ſatanæ traditos eſſe concedimus, non tamen poſſe propriam, Dici ejectos ex Eccleſia Catholica, Quia Excommunicatio non Catholica, ſed particularis Eccleſiæ cenſura eſt.* De Eccleſ. Qu. 1. c. 6. Wherefore if Excommunication which belongs to the viſible Church, belongeth to a particular Congregation, it followeth, that there is no viſible Church, but onely a particular Congregation. Secondly, As all viſible Believers are not without Chriſt, but in Chriſt, according as they are believers, ſo we eaſily grant, that thoſe without, of whom the Apoſtle

Apostle speakes, 1 *Cor.* 5. were unbelievers, Pagans, and Heathens, both without Christ, and also without the visible Church. For those that were in Christ, and believers in Him, were not wont to abstaine from joyning to some particular Congregation or other; and so it come to passe, that as they were in Christ by their Faith, so by such joyning they became also to be within the visible Church. 3. But this we conceive is cleare also, that unlesse Believers, be Members of this or that particular Congregation, to whose inspection and Government they have commended themselves in the Lord, they also in some respect may be said to be without, that is without the jurisdiction and power of the visible Church, and without right to the priviledges of it, as long as they continue in that State: for the Church hath nothing to do, either to dispence censures and Church priviledges to Pagans, who are without all Churches, and without *Christ* also; or to such Christians who though they are not without *Christ*, yet are not within any particular Church: for neither the Church, nor the Ministers thereof may be ἀλλοτριεπισκοποι. And though those without of whom the Apostle speakes, 1 *Cor.* 5. were Pagans and Heathens, both without *Christ*, and without the visible Church also, yet when hee speaketh of Judgeing, and saith they might judge them that are within, and not judge them that are without, hee must not be understood as if he meant it simply of being in Christ or without Christ, and no more then so, but also of being in that particular Congregation, and without it: for it is plaine, that those that were in *Christ*, if they were not also within their particular Congregation, they had nothing to do to judge them; and those that were within their particular Congregation, them they might judge, though they were not in *Christ*. 4. And that Church priviledges do not belong to Believers, as such, but onely to such as withall are Members of some particular Church: the Grounds and Reasons in the Answer to the third and fourth Proposition sent the last yeare, do seeme to us to make manifest, whereto we do referre you, for further Answer to this Question.

To: 4. It is an opinion of the Anabaptists, that the Church is made by Baptisme, and therefore when they constitute or erect a Church, they do it by being all of them Baptized, which was the manner of Mr. *Smith*, Mr. *Helwis*, and the rest of that company when they set up their Church: The Papists also do imagine, that men enter into the Church by Baptisme, and it is said, that their Founts were set neere the doores of their Temples, to signifie mens entring into the Church by Baptisme, and they thought themselves to be christened, or made christian soules by being Baptized. But we do not believe that Baptisme doth make men Members of the Church, nor that it is to be Administred to them that are without the Church, as the way and meanes to bring them in, but to them that are within the Church, as a seale to confirme the Covenant of God unto them. For

1. This is one point of the dignity and priviledge of the Church, that Baptisme and all Church Ordinances are given and committed to it, as Circumcision, and Church Ordinances were given and concredited to the Church of the Jewes, *Ioh.* 7. 22. Now if Baptisme in its first being and institution be given as a benefit and priviledge to the Church, then Baptisme is not that which makes the Church; but the Church is presupposed, and must be before it, for the dones, or persons to whom a thing is given, must needs be before the gift that is given to them.

2. The nature and use of Baptisme is to be a seale to confirme the Covenant of Grace between God and his Church, and the Members thereof, as circumcision also was, *Rom.* 4. 11. Now a seale is not to make a thing that was not, but to confirme something that was before; and so Baptisme is not that which gives being to the Church, nor to the Covenant, but is for confirmation thereof. To bring in Baptisme before the Covenant, and before the Church, with whom God makes the Covenant: and then to bring in the Church afterwards, is to make Baptisme a seale unto a Blanke, or to a falshood. When the Jesuits of *Rhemes* had said that *Christ*

sent

ſent 12 Apoſtles to the Jewes to move them to penance, and ſo by Baptiſme to make them of his Church. And that *Paul* was ſent to the Gentiles to move them alſo to faith and penance, and by Baptiſme to make them of his Church. This ſaying of making men of the Church by Baptiſme, though uttered by them, as it were by the way, and not being the chiefe ſcope of their diſcourſe, yet ſeemed to Mr. *Cartwright* ſo erroneous and unſound, that hee would not let it paſſe without bearing ſpeciall witneſſe againſt the ſame. And therefore in oppoſition thereunto he hath theſe words, and in another Character for more conſpicuouſneſſe, *viz.* That Baptiſme makes not men of the Church, but ſealeth their incorporation into it, hath been declared afore. *Argument* of *Acts* 6. 1. And that Catechiſme which is commonly ſaid to be penned by our Reverend Brother Mr. *Ball*, or Mr. *Nicholas*, now with God, giving this for the definition of Baptiſme, that it is a Sacrament of our ingrafting into Chriſt, communion with him, and entrance into the Church, doth in the Expoſition plainely declare, that when they called Baptiſme a Sacrament of our entrance into the Church, they did not meane that Baptiſme made men Members of the Church, but ſignified and ſealed that they were Members afore: The ſeed of Abraham ſay they, * *Pag* 144. *Gal.* 3. 7. or children of Chriſtian Parents are within the Covenant, are Chriſtians and Members of the Church, 1 *Cor.* 7. 14. *Rom.* 11. 16. Baptiſme therefore doth not make them Chriſtian ſoules, but doth ſolemnly ſignifie and Seale their ingrafting into Chriſt, and that communion which the Members of *Chriſt* have with him their head, and doth confirme, that they are acknowledged Members of the Church, and entred into it, 1 *Pet.* 3. 21. * p. 206. 20

3. The Lord hath had his Church when there was neither Baptiſme nor circumciſion, and therefore Baptiſme or circumciſion cannot be that which conſtitutes the Church. The Church is one and the ſame in eſſence from the beginning of the world to the end thereof, *viz.* A company of People combined together by holy Covenant with God,

and one with another, and this hath been before Baptiſme, and likewiſe before Circumciſion in the dayes of the Patriarks afore *Abraham*. Yea if Baptiſme now, or Circumciſion in former time did make men Members of the Church, then for 40 yeares together there was no making Members of the Church, then for 40. yeares together there was no making Members of the Church; for ſo long circumciſion was diſcontinued, when Baptiſme was not yet inſtituted, *Ioſſ.* 5. 2, 3. *&c.* And ſo by this meanes all that Generation of the Iſraelites that were not circumciſed till their comming over *Jordan* unto *Gilgall*, ſhould have bin no Members of the Church afore that time of their circumciſion, which is contrary to the Scripture, which as it gives the name and title of a Church to the body of this people, when they were in the Wilderneſſe, *Act.* 7. 38. (and they were in the Wilderneſſe 40. yeares, in the latter parts of which time there were few left remaining that had beene circumciſed) ſo it witneſſeth that afore this time of their circumciſion they were in covenant with God and his Church, *Deut.* 29. 10, 11, 12. For that covenant was not made with their Fathers that came out of Egypt, and were circumciſed there, becauſe that generation was conſumed in the Wilderneſſe for their murmuring afore this time: but this covenant was made with the children, that as yet were uncircumciſed, and therefore it was not circumciſion that made men Members of the Church.

4. Baptiſme hath been Adminiſtred, and no Church nor Members made thereby, and men have been made Members of Churches and not then Baptiſed, but before. And therfore it is not Baptiſme that makes men Members of the Church, Jeruſalem and all Judea, and all the Region round about Jordan were Baptiſed of *Iohn*, confeſsing their ſinnes, *Mat.* 3. 6. And Chriſt made and Baptiſed more Diſciples then *Iohn*, *Iob.* 4. 1. And yet neither Chriſt nor John did make new Churches nor gather men into them themſelves, both the one and the other living and dying Members of the Jewiſh Church, which was not yet diſſolved, untill upon

on their rejecting of Christ (not onely of his person upon the crosse, but of his Gospel in blaspheming and persecuting Grace offered them) the two staves of beauty and bands were broken and cut asunder, whereby God did breake the Covenant that he had made with that People, and the Brotherhood between Juda and Israel, that is, he did un-church them, *Zach.* 11. 10, 11. *&c.* to 15. So that here is Baptisme Administred by John and Christ, and yet men not received thereby into the Church as Members, for they were Members long afore.

Againe, when any of those of Jerusalem, Judea, and the Region round about Jordan, that were Baptised of John, or any of those, many more that were Baptised of Christ, were afterward joyned as Members to those christian Churches in Judea, Samaria, and Galile, *Act.* 9. 31. (As no doubt many of them were) they were not made Members of those Christian Churches by being Baptised, for they were Baptised long afore by John and Christ, so that those men were Members of the Jewish Church, which was not yet dissolved, and were Baptised afterward. And therefore it was not Baptisme that made them members, either of the one Church or of the other.

5. There are sundry inconveniences which for ought we see will unavoidably follow, if we shall say that Baptisme makes men members of the Church; For first, if Baptisme be that which constituts the Church, then Baptisme may be dispenced by them that are no Ministers, for extraordinary Ministers, as Apostles, and such like are now ceased, and ordinary Ministers have no power to dispence Baptisme to any, but onely to them that are already members of the Church, seeing their Commission and power is limited to the Church, and the flock of God over which the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers, *Acts* 20. 28. Besides, the Church is before the Ministers, seeing the power of choosing Ministers is given by Christ unto the Church; and therfore if Baptisme be that which makes the Church, then men must be Baptised afore there be Ministers to Baptise them

Secondly, if Baptiſme rightly for ſubſtance partaked, doth make men members of the viſible Church, then it will follow that Papiſts are members of the Church: for they have Baptiſme ſo farre right for ſubſtance, as that it needs not be repeated. But Mr. *Perkins* teacheth that this Baptiſme proves not the Church of *Rome*, of which all Papiſts are members, to be any true Church of God, and gives ſundry Reaſons for the ſame, in Anſwer to them, that from Baptiſme rightly for ſubſtance Adminiſtred in Popiſh Aſſemblies, would prove thoſe Aſſemblies to be true Churches: *Expoſit. of Creede*, in the Article, *I believe the holy Catholique Church.*

And ſurely for our parts, we doe not ſee how it will be avoyded, but if Baptiſme made men members of the viſible Church, either Papiſts are members of the viſible Church, and the Church of *Rome*, of which they are Members, a true viſible Church, or elſe we muſt renounce their Baptiſme as corrupt and falſe even for the ſubſtance of it; and ſo all ſuch as ſhall be converted from amongſt them, muſt be Baptiſed againe, as not having had the ſubſtance of Baptiſme before: ſuch dangerous conſequences do follow from ſaying, that Baptiſme, rightly for ſubſtance partaked, doth make them that are ſo Baptiſed Members of the viſible Church.

Object. If any ſhall ſay, *Though Baptiſme do not make men Members of the Church, yet it proves them to be Members as a cauſe, is proved by the effect, or an Antecedent by a conſequent: and therefore all Baptiſed Perſons ſhould be admitted to all Church priviledges as Members, where ever they become.*

Anſw. We Anſwer that this will not hold neither, but ſuppoſe a man have received Baptiſme as a Member of ſome viſible Church, which ought not to have been Adminiſtred to him, had he not been a member, yet this doth not prove him to be a member ſtill and ſo give him right to all Church Priviledges, though hee do remaine alwaies as a Baptiſed perſon; and the Reaſon is, becauſe his Baptiſme may remain, when his Church fellowſhip may be diſſolved, as that he can have no right to Sacraments thereby: the

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Church member-ſhip of a Baptiſed Perſon may be thus diſſolved by ſundry meanes. 1. By ſome ſentence of Excommunication juſtly paſſed againſt him for his ſinne; for that cenſure puts him away from the Communion of the Church, 1 *Cor.* 5. 2 13. and makes him as an Heathen or Publican, *Mat.* 18. 17. So that in that caſe he can have no right to Sacraments by his Member-ſhip, though he ſtill continue a Baptiſed Perſon. 2. By his voluntary departing from the Church and the communion of the ſame when it is unjuſtly done, 1 *Ioh.* 2. 19. *Iude* 19. *Heb.* 10. 25. In which caſe Dr. *Ames* reſolves ſuch Schiſmaticks to be no Members of the viſible Church, *Caſ. Conſ. Lib.* 5. *c.* 12 *Q.* 4. *Reſp.* 3. 3. By the diſſolution of the Church of which he was a Member; for Church Member-ſhip is in relation to a Church, and therefore if the Church ceaſe, the Member-ſhip muſt ceaſe alſo; *Relatum & correlatum Quâ talia ſunt ſimul, adeoque ſe mutuo ponunt et tollunt.* Now a Church may be diſſolved, 1. By Apoſtacie and Gods giving them a bill of Divorce thereupon, *Ier.* 3. 8. When yet there may be in ſuch a Church ſome particular perſon or perſons deare to God, who in ſuch a caſe are bid to come out from ſuch an Apoſtate Church, *Rev.* 18. 4. *Hoſe.* 2. 1, 2. & 4, 15, 17. 2. By death, as by ſome grievous Peſtilence or Maſacre, *&c.* in which caſe one particular perſon ſurviving, cannot be counted a Member of a Church, when that Church is extinct of which he was, and yet he remaines a perſon Baptiſed if he were Baptiſed afore. 3. If that be true which is taught by Dr. *Ames Caſ. Conſ. Lib.* 5. *c.* 12. *Q.* 3. *Reſp.* 2. that in ſome caſes it is lawfull and neceſſary to withdraw from the communion of a true Church (which ſeemes to be agreeable to grounds of Scripture, *Epheſ.* 5. 11. 2 *Chron.* 11. 14.) then that will be another caſe wherein Church Member-ſhip is diſanulled; for how a man can be counted in that ſtate a Member of a Church, when hee hath lawfully and neceſſarily withdrawn himſelfe from the communion of the Church, we do not underſtand. And this ſhall ſuffice for Anſwer unto this Point, whether Baptiſme make men

Members of a visible Church, which as we conceive, is the scope and drift of this Question. Yet before we proceed to make Answer to the next, something also may be said concerning some passages in your Amplification of this fourth Question. As first concerning those words wherein you aske, *Whether they that are Baptised have not right, quoad nos, to all the priviledges of the visible Church* (so farre as they are otherwise fit:) concerning which words we may say, 1. That those words of your Parenthesis *(so farre as they are otherwise fit:)* doe plainely imply, that in your judgement, though one hath received Baptisme, yet this doth not give him right to the priviledges of the visible Church, unlesse other things do concurre to make him fit, wherein we consent with you. Now if this be so, then this seemes to be an Answer to that which (as we conceive) is the maine intent of the Question. For how can it be, that Baptisme alone should give men right to the priviledges of the Church (as Members thereof, as the Question seemes to import) when in the Amplification of it, it is granted, that Persons Baptised have no such right, except other things doe concurre to make them fit: we doe not see how these things doe stand together.

Secondly, those words *as farre as they are otherwise fit:*) as they seeme to imply that which contradicts the maine scope of the Question; so they are so generall and of such a latitude, as that when the Question is Answered, the Reader is still left at uncertainty: For if such a Parenthesis may be annexed (*so farre as men are otherwise fit:*) then the like Question may be applied to many other things besides Baptisme, and would receive the very same Answer, as in case of Baptisme it would receive. As for example, if one should aske whether Morall honestie or litterall knowledge in the Scriptures, or Historicall Faith, or the use of Reason, whether any of these doe not give men right to Church priviledges, so farre as they are otherwise fit? You know the Answer would be, Yea. For though none of these be sufficient alone, to give men right to the priviledges of the Church,

Church, yet they are such as they that have them, have right so farre as they are otherwise fit, and so if it were granted that they that have received Baptisme have right, as you say, to all the priviledges of the Church so farre as they are otherwise fit; yet as that doth not prove that Baptisme alone doth give men such a right, so still it remaines to be considered, and more particularly declared, what those other things are that besides Baptisme must concurre to make one fit; and unlesse those things be expressed in particular, the Question with such a generall Qualification as is here set down, may be Answered affirmatively, and yet the Reader will be still in the darke, and as much to seeke as before.

Lastly, those words in the latter end of this Question had need to be further cleared, wherein you aske, *Whether Baptised persons have not right to all the priviledges of the Church, quoad nos, untill they be cast out by Excommunication?* For suppose an open Blasphemer, a Sabath-breaker, an Adulterer, a Drunkard, *&c.* that deserves to be Excommunicated, be not proceeded against according to rule, but be suffered to continue in the Church through bribery or other corruption of the times, would you say that such a person had right either before God, or *quoad nos* to all the priviledges of the Church, onely because hee is Baptised? Surely your words doe import so much, unlesse that Parenthesis (*so far as they are otherwise fit*) may be any helpe in this cese. And yet we hope you doubt not but such Doggs and Swine have no right either *quoad nos*, or otherwise, to the priviledges of the Church as long as they continue in that State, although they have received Baptisme, and although through the sinfull neglect of men they be not cast out by Excommunication, as they doe deserve; For if grosse sinners have such right to Church priviledges, onely because they are Baptised, then by what right can the Church cast them out by Excommunication, as you seeme to confesse that she may: for can she cast men out from such priviledges whereunto they have right? doubtlesse such proceedings were not

right, unleſſe the Church have ſuch a Tranſcendent power as the Apoſtles never had, for they could do nothing againſt the truth but for the truth, nor had they any power for deſtruction, but for Edification, 2 Cor. 13. 8. 10. Wherefore we dare not ſay ſuch men have right to Church priviledges (*quoad nos*) untill they be actually caſt out, becauſe before they be caſt out, it muſt be cleare to the Church, that they have no ſuch right, or elſe ſhe can have no lawfull Right to caſt them out.

To 5. & 6. 1. Infants with us are Admitted Members in and with their Parents, ſo as to be Admitted to all Church priviledges of which Infants are capable, as namely to Baptiſme; and therefore when Parents are once Admitted, their Children are thereupon Baptiſed, if they were not Baptiſed afore, as ſometimes it falls out. 2. But whether they ſhould thereupon be admitted to all other priviledges when they come to age, without any perſonall profeſsion of Faith, or entring into Church Covenant, is another Queſtion, of which by Reaſon of the Infancy of theſe Churches, we have had no occaſion yet to determine what to judge or practiſe one way or other. 3. But for the preſent this we would ſay; It ſeemes by thoſe words of your Parentheſis (*being otherwiſe fit*) you do acknowledge, that Children of Church Members are not to be admitted to Church priviledges, unleſſe they be fit, wherein we conſent with you as counting it altogether unſafe, that Idiots, Franticks, or perſons openly ungracious and prophane, ſhould be admitted to the Lords Table, though they were the Children of Church Members, and thence we may inferre the neceſſity of their perſonall profeſsion of their faith, when they come to yeares, and taking hold of Church-Covenant, whereby we meane onely a Renewing of Covenant, or a new profeſsing of their Intereſt in Gods Covenant, and walking according to it, when they ſhall be *Aaulti*: for otherwiſe we do confeſſe, Children that are borne when their Parents are Church Members, are in Covenant with God even from their birth,

birth, *Gen.* 17. 7. 12. and their Baptiſme did ſeale it to them. But notwithſtanding their Birthright, we conceive there is a neceſsity of their perſonall profeſsion of Faith and taking hold of Church-Covenant when they come to yeares (though you ſeeme to thinke it not needfull:) for without this it cannot ſo well be diſcerned; what fitneſſe is in them for the Lords Table and other Church priviledges, as by this meanes it might? And inaſmuch as entring into Church-Covenant is nothing elſe but a ſolemne promiſe to the Lord, before him and the Church, to walke in all ſuch wayes as the Goſpel requireth of Church Members, if they ſhall refuſe to make any ſuch promiſe, and ſhall be unable, or unwilling to make any profeſsion of their Faith when it is required of them, this would be an evidence againſt them, of their unfitneſſe for Church priviledges, inaſmuch as they openly breake that Rule, 1 *Pet.* 3. 15. Be ready to give a Reaſon of the hope that is in you with meekneſſe and feare. What hope is there that they will examine themſelves when they eat of that Bread and drinke of that Cup, 1 *Cor.* 11. 28. Who when others do examine them they are unable or unwilling to give Anſwer? Or how ſhall we thinke that they will receive the Lords Supper worthily, or walke as becomes the Goſpel if they do refuſe to profeſſe or promiſe any ſuch matter? Wherefore in this Point we cannot but fully approve the practiſe of the Reformed Churches, among whom it is the manner as *Zepperus* writeth, to admit Children that were Baptiſed in their Infancy unto the Lords Table, by publique profeſsion of their Faith, and entring into Covenant, *conſuetum eſt*, ſaith he *ut qui per ætatem, in quæ Doctrinæ Catechetici profectum ad ſacram Cœnam primum admittuntur, fidei confeſſionem coram tota Eccleſiâ publicè edant*, &c. *Polit. Eccleſ. l.* 1. *c.* 14. *p.* 158. that is, The manner is, that they who by reaſon of age and porficiency in the Doctrine of Catechiſme are firſt Admitted to the Lords Supper, ſhould publiquely before the whole Church, make confeſsion of their Faith, being brought forth into the ſight of the Church by their Parents, or them that are inſtead of Parents, at the

appointment of the Minister: and likewise should promise and Covenant by the Grace of God to continue in that faith which they have confessed, and to leade their lives according to it: yea and moreover, to subject themselves freely and willingly to the Discipline of the Church; these words we see are full and plaine, that Children are not in those Churches received to the Lords Table without personall confession of Faith, and entring into Covenant before.

4. But how long Children should be counted under age, and whether Orphans are not to be admitted with their Guardians (which is your sixt Quæry) we should be willing to heare your judgement therein, as having of our selves hitherto had no occasion to search into those Questions; onely this we thinke, that one certaine rule cannot be given for all, whereby to determine how long they are under age, but according as God gives experience and maturity of naturall understanding, and Spirituall; which he gives sooner to some then unto others.

To 7. Such Children whose Father and Mother were neither of them Believers, and sanctified, are counted by the Apostle (as it seemes to us) not fœderally holy, but meleane, what ever their other Ancestors have been, 1 *Cor.* 7. 14. And therefore we Baptise them not. If you can give us a sufficient Answer, to take us off from that Scripture, 1 *Cor.* 7. which seemes to limit this fœderall sanctity or holynesse to the Children whose next Parents one or both were Believers, we should gladly hearken to you therein; but for the present, as we believe we speake, and practise according to our light. And if we should goe one degree beyond the next Parents, we see not but we may goe two, and if two, why not 3. 4. 20. 100. or 1000? For where will you stop? And if we shall admit all Children to Baptisme, whose Ancestors within a thousand Generations have been Believers, as some would have us, we might by this Reason Baptise the Children of *Turkes*, and of all the *Indians*, and *Barbarians* in the Country; for there is none of them but they have had

had some Believing Ancestors within lesse then a 1000. Generations, it being farre from so much since *Noah* and his Sonnes came forth out of the Arke.

We do believe that all Members of Churches ought to be Saints, and faithfull in Christ Jesus, *Eph.* 1. 1. 1 *Cor.* 1. 2. *Col.* 1. 2. *Phil.* 1. 1. and thereupon we count it our duty to use all lawfull and convenient meanes, whereby God may helpe us to discerne, whether those that offer themselves for Church Members, be persons so qualified or no: and therefore first we heare them speake concerning the Gift and Grace of Justifying Faith in their soules, and the manner of Gods dealing with them in working it in their hearts: which seemes to be your first particular in this Quæry. Secondly, we heare them speake what they do believe concerning the Doctrine of Faith, so taking a tryall what measure they have of the good knowledge of the Lord, as knowing that without knowledge men cannot well Examine themselves and discerne the Lords body, as Church Members ought to doe when they come to the Lords Table. And hereby also we would prevent (as the Lord shall helpe us) the creeping in of any into the Church that may be infected with corrupt opinions of Arminianisme Familisme, *&c.* or any other dangerous error against that faith which was once delivered to the Saints, as knowing how easily such men if they were admitted, might infect others, and perhaps destroy the Faith of some. And this seemes to be intended in your second particular. For both these we have our warrant as in Generall from those places which shew how Church Members ought to be qualified, that they ought to be Saints, faithfull in Christ Jesus, *&c.* So in speciall from that, *Matth.* 3. 6. *Acts* 19 18. & *Acts* 8. 37. 38. Where men before they were admitted, made profession of Repentance towards God, and faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ; for it is expressely said, that they confessed their sinnes, they confessed and shewed their deeds, they professed their faith in Jesus Christ the Sonne *To* 8.

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of God. Thirdly, when this is done, those that by manifestation of Repentance and Faith are approved; as fit Members for a Church do openly professe their subjection to the Gospel of Christ, and to all the Ordinances of God in that Church, where now they joyne as Members, which seemes to be your third particular in this Quærie. The Distinction of particular Churches one from another, as severall and distinct Societies, seemes to us a necessary ground for this practise; for without this kinde of Covenanting, we know not how it would be avoyded, but all Churches would be confounded into one, inasmuch as it is neither Faith, nor intire affection, nor Towne-dwelling, nor frequenting the Assemblies that can make a man a Member, or distinguish Church Members from other men: See the Apologie.

4. Your fourth particular in this Quærie is Answered in the Answer to the sixt Position sent the last yeare: Besides all these, we heare the testimony of others, if there be any that can speake of the conversion and Godly conversation of such persons: which we judge to be a warrantable course from *Acts* 9. 26, 27.

To 9. It is the second of your Quæries, what things we held necessary to the Being of a true visible Church in Generall: which being Answered; this of the Parish Assemblies in *England* in particular, whether we hold all or the most of them to be Churches, we conceive might well have been spared. They that ~~now~~ the state of those Assemblies may make application of the Generall to the particulars, if they have a calling therunto. Yet because you are pleased to put us to this also, we thus Answer. 1. That we doubt not but of Ancient time there have been many true Churches in *England* consisting of right matter, and compacted and united together by the right forme of an holy Covenant. For Mr. *Fox* sheweth at large, that the Gospel was brought into *England* in the Apostles times, or within a little while after, *Acts & Mon. lib.* 2. begining *p.* 137. Where hee reporteth out of *Gildas*, that *England* received the Gospel in the time

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of *Tiberius* the Emperor, under whom Chriſt ſuffered; and that *Joſeph* of *Arimathea* was ſent of *Philip* the Apoſtle from *France* to *England*, about the yeare of Chriſt 63. and remained in *England* all his time, and ſo hee with his fellowes laid the firſt foundation of Chriſtian Faith among the Brittaine people, and other Preachers and Teachers comming afterwards, confirmed the ſame and increaſed it. Alſo the ſaid Mr. *Fox* reporteth out of *Tertullian*, that the Goſpel was diſperced abroad by the ſound of the Apoſtles into many Nations, and amongſt the reſt into Brittaine, yea into the wildeſt places of Brittaine, which the Romans could never attaine unto, and alledgeth alſo out of *Nicephorus*, that *Simon Zelotes* did ſpread the Goſpell to the Weſt Ocean, and brought the ſame into the Iles of *Brittanie*, and ſundry other proofs he there hath for the ſame Point. Now if the Goſpel and Chriſtian Religion were brought into *England* in the Apoſtles times, and by their meanes, it is like there were Churches planted there of Saints by calling (which is the right matter of Churches) and by way of holy Covenant, as the right form: for that was the manner of Conſtituting Churches in the Apoſtles times, as alſo in the times afore Chriſt, as hath been ſhewed from the Scripture in the Apologie. And the footſteps hereof (though mixed with manifold corruptions that have growne in aftertimes) are remaining in many places of the Land to this day, as appeareth by thoſe 3 Queſtions and Anſwers at Baptiſme. *Abrenuntias? Abrenuntio; Credis? Credo: Spondes? Spondeo: Doſt thou renounce the Devill and all his works? I renounce them all, doſt thou believe in God the Father, &c? I do believe. Doſt thou promiſe to walk according to this Faith &c? I do promiſe.* For though it may be they conceived, that men entred into the Church by Baptiſme, yet hereby it appears that their judgment was that, when men entred into the *Church* there ought to be a renouncing of ſin, and believing on *Chriſt*, and an open profeſſing of theſe things, with a promiſe to walk accordingly.

Secondly, Though Popiſh Apoſtacy did afterwards for many ages over ſpread all the Churches in *England* (as in other Countries) yet we believe God ſtill reſerved a remnant according to the Election of Grace amongſt them, for

whoſe ſake he reſerved the Holy Scriptures amongſt them, and Baptiſme in the name of the Trinity onely. And when God of his rich Grace was pleaſed to ſtirre up the Spirit of King *Edward* the ſixth, and Queene *Elizabeth* to caſt off the Pope, and all fundamentall errors in Doctrine and Worſhip, and a great part of the Tyranny of Popiſh Church Government, though at firſt ſome Shires and ſundry Pariſhes ſtood out againſt that Reformation for a time, yet afterwards they generally received the Articles of Religion agreed upon *Anno* 1562. which are publiſhed and conſented to by all the Miniſters endowed in every Congregation, with the ſilent conſent alſo of the people, and ſubſcription of the hands of the chiefe of them; wherein they do acknowledge no rule of Faith or manners, but the holy Scriptures; no divine Worſhip but to God onely; no mediation nor ſalvation but in Chriſt onely: no converſion by mans free will, but by Gods free Grace: no Juſtification but by Faith: no perfection nor merit of works, with ſundry other neceſſary and ſaving truths; all which containing the Marrow and Summe of the Oracles of God (wich are the λόγια, the *eloquia Dei*, concredited onely to the Church. *Rom.* 3. 1. 2. and which are that ſaving Doctrine of truth, which is fruitfull in all the world where it comes, *Colo.* 1. 5, 6. and upon which the Church is grounded and built, and which alſo it holdeth forth and maintaineth, 1 *Tim.* 3. 15.) we do therefore acknowledge, that where the people do with common and mutuall conſent gather into ſetled Congregations ordinarily every Lords day, as in *England* they do, to heare and teach this Doctrine, and do profeſſe their ſubjection therunto, and do binde themſelves and their Children (as in Baptiſme they do) to continue therein, that ſuch Congregations are true Churches, notwithſtanding ſundry defects and dangerous corruptions found in them, wherein we follow the judgement of *Calvin Inſtit.* 4. 1. 9. 10. *&c. Whitaker, de notis Eccleſiæ cap.* 17. and many other Divines of chiefe note: nor can we judge or ſpeake harſhly of the Wombes that bare us, nor of the paps which gave us ſuck.

Thirdly, But inaſmuch as grievous corruptions of latter yeares have greatly increaſed in ſome of thoſe Aſſemblies (as

(as we heare) both in Doctrine, in Worship, and in the Government thereof; besides those that were when some of us were there, and in former Yeares: Therefore we are not without feare (and with griefe we speake it) what things may come unto at length. If Corruptions should still increase and grow, they might come in time (if the Lord be not more mercifull) unto such an height as unto obstinacy in evill, and to willfull rejection of Reformation, and the meanes thereof; and then you know it might be just with God to cast off such utterly, out of the account and number of his Churches; so as never to walke among them any more: which we heartily pray the Father of mercies to prevent that such a day may never be: But if *Ephesus* repent not of her declinings, the Lord hath threatned that *he will come unto her quickly, and remove her Candlestick*; that is, he will un-Church them, *Rev.* 2. 4, 5. and *Lukewarme Laodicea shall be spewed out of his Mouth*, *Rev.* 3. 16. And therefore it behoves such of them to Repent, and Reform themselves betime, lest the Lord deale with them as he hath done with others.

And it much concernes your selves (in hearty love and faithfullnesse we speake it, and so we desire you would accept of it) it very much concernes you (deare Brethren) whil'st you live amongst them, to beare faithfull witnesse against the corruptions that are remaining in any of them, in respect of their Constitution, Worship, Discipline and Ministerie, lest by any sinnefull silence or slacknesse of yours that should blow the Trumpet and stand in the gap, the breach should be made wider, and the iniquity increase; and lest men should flatter themselves in their sinnes, under the Name and Title of the true Church, as the Jewes thought themselves secure because of the Temple of the Lord, *Jer.* 7. 4.

4. Because you would know not onelie whether we count those Assemblies to be Churches, but what wee would doe for joining in Gods Worship in them, if occasion served thereunto: We Answer, that if we were in *England*, we should willingly joine in some parts of Gods true Worship, and namely in hearing the Word, where it is truely Preached in sundry Assemblies there; Yea though we doe not know them to bee Churches, or knew not what they were, whether true Churches or no? For some Worship, as Praier, and Preaching, and Hearing

ring the Word, is not peculiar to Church Assemblies, but may be performed in other meetings. *Mars-hill* at *Athens* was no Church, nor the Prison at *Philippi*, and yet the Word of GOD was Preached and heard lawfully with good successe in those places, *Act.* 17. and *Act.* 16. How much more might it bee lawfull to heare the word in many Parish assemblies in *England*, in which generally there is a professing of Christ; and in many of them: Many Soules that are sincere and upright hearted Christians, as any are this day upon the face of the Earth; and many Congregations indeed that are the true Churches of Jesus Christ, *See* Mr. *Robinsons* Treatise of the lawfullnesse of hearing the Ministers in the Church of ENGLAND.

5. But why we durst not partake in their prescript Lyturgie, and such Ordinances though true, as are administred therein; We gave you account the last Yeare, in Answer to the first and second Position: As also in an Answer to a Discourse of that Subject, Penned by our Reverend Brother Mr. *Ball*. What we have done in our ignorance whilst we lived amongst you, wee have seene cause rather to bewaile it in our selves here, then to it in others there.

To 10. Our Answer to this Question is this, 1. That we never yet knew any to come from *England* in such a manner as you do here describe (if the things you mention may be taken *conjunctim*, and not severally) *viz*: to be Men famously known to be godly, and to bring sufficient Testimoniall thereof from others that are so knowne, and from the Congregation it selfe, whereof they were Members: We say we never yet knew any to come to us from thence in such a manner, but one or other of the things here mentioned are wanting: and generally this is wanting in all of them, that they bring no Testimoniall from the Congregation it selfe: And therefore no marvell if they have not beene admitted (further then before hath been expressed in Answer to Quest. 1.) to Church Ordinances with us, before they have joyned to one or other of our Churches; for though some that come over bee famously knowne to our selves to be Godly, or bring sufficient Testimoniall with them from private Christians, yet neither is our knowledge of them, nor Testimonal from private Christians sufficient to give us Church-power over them, which wee had

had need to have, if we must dispence the Ordinances of Church communion to them? though it be sufficient to procure all due Reverent respect, and hearty love to them in the Lord.

2. If the things mentioned were all to be found, yet it would be also requisite (if they would partake of Church Ordinances with us, and yet not joyne to any of our Churches) that wee should know the Congregation it selfe, from which they come, not onely to be a true Church, but also what manner of one it is: For such persons cannot communicate with us in Church Ordinances in their owne right; because they joine not as Members in any of our Churches; but it must be in right of the Congregation in *England*, to which they doe belong, and by virtue of the communion of Churches, and so our admitting of them to communion with us in such a manner, and upon such terms, is not only an Act of Communion with the persons themselves, but also with the Congregation of which they are: Now as we cannot of Faith admit men to Church Ordinances, which we believe belong only to Church Members; unles we know the Congregation of which they are Members to be a true Church. So somtimes a Congregation may be so corrupt, that though it doe remain a true Church, yet for the corruption and impurities of it, it may be lawfull and necessary to withdraw communion from the same (for which Dr. *Ames* gives sundry grounds and Reasons, *Cas. Cons. lib. c.* 12. *Q.* 3. *Resp.* 2.) or at least to protest against some grosse corruptions therein. In regard whereof we had need to have some knowledge and information what that Congregation is, with whom now we have Church communion; when in their right wee admit men into communion, that wee may know how to admit such Men, and what to require from them more or lesse. And this together with that want of testimoniall from the congregation is one maine Reason, why some few godly men that have come from *England* upon occasion, not with purpose of continuance here, but of returning againe; have not beene received to Church Ordinances during their abode in the Countrey (though this we may say also, that we know not of any such that have requested to be received), whereas such as have come in like manner from one Church to another amongst our selves, upon their request have been received: the Reason we say is, because these Churches are better

knowne then the Parish Assemblies are.

3. But if men come from one Church in this Countrey to another with purpose there to stay, and not to returne to the Church from whence they came, (which is the manner of all, or the most that come from *England*) they are not received into our Churches; but upon the very same tearmes, and in the same manner, as men are received that come from *England*; viz: upon personall profession of their faith, and entring into Church Covenant, in that Church to which they now come (And the same we say of such as come from any of the Churches in other Countries) and wherefore are they not received otherwise, because we renounce the Church of which they were Members as no true Church? Not so, but because wee believe in matter of Faith, (such as is the admitting of Members) any true Church may erre: and there may now bee seene some unworthinesse in the man which did not appeare when hee was admitted in the other Church: and therefore no reason that the Act of one Church in the admitting of Members or the like, should bee a binding Rule unto another; for all Churches are left to their liberty to admit and receive such into their Church; as they shal find to be fit according to the Rule of the word, and to refuse others, without respect of what they have bin before, whether Members of this Church, or that Church, or of any Church, or none: and therefore in this, our walking and practice, is alike towards one another, and towards others as it is towards yours. In which practise we are not alone, for the very same as Mr. *Parker* reporteth, is the manner of the Reformed Churches, amongst whom, no man is admitted for a Member; but upon personall profession of faith, and entring into Church covenant, though it may be he have formally beene admitted in the very same manner in the Church where he lived before, *Polit. Eccles. l. 3. c. 16. 3, 4. p. 171.*

To 11. If the ground of this Qu. were any doubt in your owne consciences concerning your owne way, there were no fault in propounding such a Qu. for further light and satisfaction, if wee were able to give it. Or if it did arise from any unnecessary intermedling of ours in your matters, so as to take on us to condemne or judge your present standing, when we have no call-

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ling thereunto, there were then Reason why we should give account of our owne doings or sayings. But if it came from some men we should looke at it as a tempting Question, tending onely to make matter, and pick quarrells; and then we should leave it to them that framed it, to consider the ground of it; and to frame their owne Answer to it. As for us, we have alwayes been slow and loth to judge or condemne your present standing; remembring the saying of the Apostle, *Who art thou that judgest another Mans Servant, he standeth or falleth to his own Master, Rom.* 14. 4. But now knowing you well (Reverend and Deare Brethren) and your integrity, we thinke wee may lawfully and safely Answer, and that wee would doe by premising a few distinctions, for explaining the Termes of the Question.

1. Concerning the persons in the Parish Assemblies, which may be meant of such as the providence of *God* hath so dispos'd that they are free and at liberty: or of such as are bound, and it may be not *sui juris*, as Wives, Children under the government of Parents, Servants, Apprentices, Prisoners, Sickefolkes, *&c.*

2. Concerning the Parish Assemblies, which may bee meant either of such as want the Preaching of the Word or Sacraments, or Discipline, or any other holy Ordinance of Christ, or have many Ordinances in them which are not of God, but of Men: or else it may be meant of some others, which in both respects are Reformed and pure, if there be any such.

3. Concerning standing in them, which may be meant onely of habitation, and dwelling upon House or Land within the Precincts of the Parish; or else in conforming in judgement or practise to the corrupt Ecclesiasticall Ordinances used in those Assemblies; and contenting themselves therewith.

4. Concerning lawfull and safe; where safety may be meant either of safety from sinne, or from danger by persecution. These Distinctions wee judge necessary to bee premised, because your Question is, whether wee count your standing in the Parish Assemblies lawfull and safe; or how farre it may be so? And so our Answer is in 3. Propositions.

1. Some Persons, and namely those that are not *sui juris*, may lawfully and without sinne; though it may bee not safely without danger of persecution, continue such standing in the Parish Assemb-

Assemblies, as doe dwell within the Precincts of them, so long as they neither conforme themselves to the corruptions of men by such continuing of their standing, nor live in the neglect or want of any Ordinance of CHRIST through their owne default.

2. Such standing in the Parish Assemblies, where a man shall, and must conforme to the corruptions of men, in Doctrine or Worship; or the Government of the Church, is not lawfull for any to be continued in.

3. To continue such standing in the Parish Assemblies, as to live in the want of any Ordinance of Christ is not lawfull, nor can be done safely without sinne of them, to whom the providence of God doth open a doore of further enlargement.

The first of these Propositions wee suppose you doubt not of.

The second is confirmed by many places of Scripture; and namely by such as these. *Though Israel play the Harlot, yet let not Iudah offend, and come not yee to Gilgall, nor go up to* Bethaven, *nor sweare the Lord liveth: Ephraim is joyned to Idolls, let him alone*, Hos. 4. 15. 17. *Come out from among them, and be ye separate saith the Lord, and touch no uncleane thing, and I will receive you*, 2 Cor. 6. 17. *Be not partaker of other Mens sinnes, keep thy selfe pure*, 1 Tim. 5. 22. *Come out of her my People, that yee bee not partakers of her sinnes, and that yee receive not of her Plagues*, Rev. 18. 4. *Have no fellowship with the unfruitfull works of darkenesse, but reprove them rather*, Eph. 5. 11. *Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgment; because he willingly walked after the Commandement*, Hos. 5. 11. *Wee ought to obey God rather then Men*, Act. 4. 19. and 5. 29. *Jeroboam* made Priests of the lowest of the People, which were not of the sonnes of Levi, and ordained a Feast in the fifteenth day of the Eigth Moneth, in the Month which he had devised of his owne heart, &c. and then the *Levites* left their Suburbs and their possessions, and came to *Iudah* and *Ierusalem*, for *Ieroboam*, and his Sonnes had cast them off from executing the Priests Office unto the Lord; and after them out of all the Tribes of Israell, such as set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel, came to *Ierusalem* to Sacrifice to the *Lord God* of their Fathers, 1 *King*. 12. 31, 32. 33. with 2 *Chron*. 11. 14. 16. Vpon these and such like grounds of holy Scripture

ture we are perſwaded that ſuch ſtanding in the Pariſh Aſſemblies, as this ſecond Propoſition mentions, is not lawfull for any to be continued in. And we hope, you doubt not of the truth of this ſecond Propoſition neither, though we are afraid that many Chriſtians, when it comes to practice, doe ſinfully pollute themſelves by partaking in the Ceremonies, and other corruptions in the prayers, in the Doctrine, and in the Miniſtery remaining in ſundry of thoſe Aſſemblies, whom it will bee your part whilſt you live among them faithfully and by all good meanes to inſtruct and teach, and exhort, to ſave themſelves from the corruptions and pollutions of the times and places wherin they live; as well in this particular of Church matters, and Gods Worſhip as in other things: Wherein wee wiſh with all our hearts that our ſelves when time was, had been more watchfull and faithfull to God and the ſoules of his People, then the beſt of us were: The Lord lay not our Ignorance to our charge.

The third Propoſition may bee made good ſundry wayes, 1. By precepts, wherin we are commanded to obſerve all things whatſoever Chriſt hath commanded, *Mat.* 28. 20. to ſeeke the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſſe, *Mat.* 6. 33. to yeild our ſelves unto the Lord, and to enter into his Sanctuary, 2 *Chr.* 30. 8. And therefore we may not pleaſe our ſelves to live in the neglect of any Ordinance which he hath inſtituted and appointed. 2. By examples, for the Spouſe of Chriſt will not reſt ſeeking her beloved untill ſhee finde him in the fulleſt manner, *Cant.* 1. 7, 8. and 3. 1, 2. *&c.* and the ſame minde was in *David*; as appeares by his heavy Lamentation, when he wanted the full fruition of Gods Ordinances, and his longings, and prayer to be reſtored thereto, *Pſal.* 63. and *Pſal.* 42. and 84. although he enjoyed *Abiathar* the High Prieſt, and the Ephod with him; and likewiſe *Gad* the Propher, 1 *Sam.* 22. 6, 9 10. &c. 1 *Sam.* 22. 5. when good *Ezra* in his journey from *Babilon* to *Ieruſalem*, viewing the People at the River *Ahava* found none of the Sonnes of Levi there, afore he would goe any further, he ſent unto *Iddo* a the place Caſiphia for Miniſters for the Houſe of God, *Ezra* 8. 15. 16. &c. And when being come to *Ieruſalem* they found by the law, that it was an Ordinance of God to dwell in Boothes, and keepe the Feaſt of Tabernacles in the ſeventh

venth Month, they presently set upon the practice thereof, in the appointed season; when the like had not beene done in Israel, from the dayes of *Iashua* the son of *Nun* unto that day, *Neh.* 8. 14. &c. Yea, and our Lord Jesus himselfe, though hee had no need of Sacraments, to be to him any seale of Remission or forgiveneſſe of sinnes, yet in conscience to the Ordinance of GOD, (that he might fullfill all righteousneſſe, *Mat.* 3. 15.) and for our example, did both observe the Passover, and likewise was Baptized, and did eat with his Disciples at his last Supper. All which examples being written for our learning, doe shew us how farre wee should bee from contenting our selves to live in the Voluntary want of any Ordinance and appointment of GOD.

3. There is none of the Ordinances of Christ, but they are needfull and very profitable in the right use of them to the soules of his Servants: And therefore they should not be neglected. To thinke of any of them, as things that may well bee spared; and therefore to content our selves to be without them, is to call in question the wisdome of him that did appoint them, and to make our selves wiser then God.

4. Our owne infirmities and Spirituall wants are such, as that wee have continuall need of all the holy meanes which the Lord hath appointed, for supplying what is wanting in us; for correcting what is amisse; and for our continuance and growth in grace. Hee is a proud man, and knowes not his own heart in any measure, who thinkes he may well be without any spirituall Institution and Ordinance of Jesus Christ. Upon these and such like grounds, we hold it not lawfull nor safe, for any Christian that is free, to continue such standing in the Parish Assemblies where he cannot enjoy all the spirituall and holy Ordinances of Christ. And hereupon we do exhort you lovingly in the Lord, to take heed that this be not the sinne of any of you, nor of any other, whom your example may embolden thereunto: For necessity is laid upon you, and upon all Christians, by these and such like grounds of the holy word of the Lord; That neither you, nor others doe live in the voluntary want of any holy Ordinance of Christ Jesus, but either set them up, and observe them in the places where you are; or else (if you bee free) to remove for the enjoyment of them, to some place where they

may

may be had; and it may be of the two, rather this latter. For ſometimes if Iſrael Sacrifice to their God in the Land, they ſhall Sacrifice the abomination of the *Egyptians* to the Lord: And ſo ſay they, *ſhall wee ſacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not ſtone us?* It is better therefore in ſuch a caſe to goe into the Wilderneſſe, and to do it there, *Exo.* 8.25. 26,27. *Hoſ.* 2. 14. *Mat.* 10. 23.

Obj: *As for that opinion that may be in the minds of ſome, that if any Ordinance of God be wanting, it is the ſinne of them that are in Authority, and they muſt anſwer for it? But the people of God may without ſinne, live in the want of ſuch Ordinances as Superiors provide not for them.*

Anſw: The Anſwer hereuntois, that indeed the Ordinances of God may more peaceably and quietly bee obſerved where the Commandement and countenance of Magiſtrates is afforded; for then is fulfilled the ſaying that is written, *Kings ſhall bee thy nurſing Fathers, and Queens thy nurſing Mothers,* Eſa. 49.23. and doubtleſſe it is a great bleſſing, when God (that hath the hearts of Kings and Princes in his hands, *Prov.* 21. 1.) doth incline them to favour, and further the ſervice of the Houſe of GOD, as ſometimes he doth, even when themſelves are Alients and Strangers. *Cyrus, Darius*, and *Artaxerxes*, gave great countenance and incouragement to the Jewes to build the Houſe of God, *that they might offer ſacrifices of ſweet ſavour to the God of Heaven, and pray for the life of the King and of his Sonnes, Ezra* 6. 8, 9,10. In which caſe good *Ezra* bleſſeth the Lord, that had put ſuch a thing into the Kings heart, to beautifie the Houſe of the God of Heaven, *Ezra* 7. 27. And therefore *Kings and all in Authority, ſhould be prayed for, that we may lead a godly and peaceable life, in Godlineſſe and honeſty,* 1 Tim. 2. 1,2. Nevertheleſſe, the things that are ordained and commanded of GOD, the obſerving of them in a peaceable way (yeilding due reverence to all that are in Authority, and praying for them) this obſerving of the Ordinances of God cannot be unlawfull, for lack of the Commandement of Man, as appeares by the doctrine and practice of the Apoſtles, *Act.* 4. 19. & 5. 29. and the approved practiſe of Believers in their times, if they had neglected the Ordinances of God, and namely Church Ordinances, till they had had the commandement of Magiſtrates therein, ſuch neglect would have

beene their grievous sinne, and for ought we know they might have lived and died without them, the Magistrates at that time being all either Heathens or Jewes, yet enemies; and if Church Communion and the exercise of such Ordinances, as Christ hath appointed for his Churches, was lawfull, and needfull, and profitable, when Magistrates were enemies to the Gospell; and bee not so when Magistrates doe professe the Gospell, we doe not see but Christians may sometimes be losers by having Christian Magistrates, and in worse condition, then if they had none but professed Enemies. Besides this, if Superiors should neglect to provide bodily sustenance for them that are under their charge; we doe not thinke that any Mans Conscience would be so scrupulous, but hee would thinke it lawfull by all good meanes to provide for himself in such case, rather then to sit still and say, if I perish for hunger, it is the sinne of them that have Authority over mee, and they must answer for it: Neither can we tell how the Conscience of any Christian can excuse himself, if he thinks not the Ordinances of Christ, as necessary for the good of his soule, as food is necessary for his temporall life; or doe not willingly in this spirituall hunger break through stone Walls as the Proverbe is, and runne from Sea to Sea to seeke God in his owne way, rather then to perish without spirituall food, because others provide not for him.

And this is our Answer to this eleventh Quere, concerning your standing in the Parish Assemblies: which Answer of ours, and the exhortation therein, as we pray the Father of mercies to make effectuall by his blessing for those good ends, which wee intend therein, so wee cannot in the same, but reflect upon our selves and our owne wayes in times past; as seeing not a little cause to judge our selves before the Lord, as long as wee live, for our sinfull ignorance and negligence, when wee were in *England*, to observe and walke according to those Rules of the Word, which now upon occasion given by this Qu. wee doe commend to your selves and other Christians. The Lord in mercy pardon our offences, and direct your selves and his servants in our deare Native Country, both in remaining and removing to doe that which is pleasing in his sight.

To 12. Whereas this Qu. in the first clause and last but one compared together

together speakes of Believers out of the Kingdome of GOD, and possibility of salvation, we conceive it is a contradiction, for those that are true Believers, cannot be out of possibility of salvaion, but possibly may, yea most undoubtedly shall bee saved, *Joh.* 3.16. and 5.24. the contrary whereof is to overthrow all the promises of the Gospell, and with the Papists and Arminians to establish falling from grace.

2. For that saying, *Extra Ecclesiam non est salus*, wee conceive it cannot be universally true, if it be meant of the visible Church, which in the New-Testament is a particular Congregation; but onely being taken for the Church invisible, or the Universall Church, which is the whole company of the elect in Heaven, in Earth, and not yet borne, *Ioh.* 10.16. and 17.20. out of which elected Company there is not one that shall be saved, nor any of the elect neither, but in the way of Regeneration, *Ioh.* 3.3. but as for the Visible, we believe the old saying is true, *there are many Wolves within, and many Sheepe without*, Joh. 10.16. and therefore it cannot be universally true, that out of the Visible Church there is no salvation: Inasmuch as all Christs Sheepe shall be saved, *Ioh.* 10.28. of whom yet notwithstanding there are some not joyned to the Visible Church: If the Theefe that repented on the Crosse was a Gentile, as it was possible he was; then hee was uncircumcised, and then it will trouble a Man to tell of what Visible Church he was: and yet there is no doubt but he was saved. The like may be said of *Iob* and of his friends, of whose salvation we make no question, and yet it is a great question whether they were of any Visible Church or no, inasmuch as the Visible Church in those times seemed to be appropriated to the House and posterity of *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Iacob*, of which line & race it cannot easily be proved that all these men did come, nor that they joined themselves in Visible fellowship with that Church. The Centurion, *Mat.* 8.10. and the Woman of *Canaan*, *Mat.* 15. were both of them believers and saved, and yet it doth not appeare that they were members of the Visible Church of the Iews, which was the only visible Church of God in those times.

Men of yeares ought to be believers, and so in the state of Salvation afore they be joyned to the Visible Church, and therefore there may be salvation out of that Church: For it is possible

that such an one as being a Believer is fit to bee joyned to the Church may die and depart this life afore hee can bee joyned, as that good Emperour *Valentinian* 2. died before hee could bee baptized. And for your selves if you should thinke that Baptisme makes men members of the Visible Church; as is intimated in your fourth Question: you may not then deny but there may be salvation out of the visible Church: unlesse you will say that there is no salvation without Baptisme, which we believe is farre from you to imagine.

3. We doe hold that so oft and so long as a believer doth not joyne himselfe as a Member to some particular Congregation or other, so oft and so long he is without the Church in the Apostles sence, 1 *Cor.* 5. for the Church in the Apostles sence, is a particular Congregation; for he writeth to, and of the Church at *Corinth*, which Church was a particular Congregation, 1 *Cor.* 5, 4. & 14. 23. & 11. 17. 20. and having power of judgeing her own Members (as all visible Churches have) yet had no power of Judgeing any, but such as were within that particular Congregation, as all them they had power to judge, whether they were believers in Christ or no. Mr. *Baine* (as we said before) is very large and cleare in proving this Position, that the Churches instituted by Christ and the Apostles, were only such as might meet in one Congregation ordinarily, and answers many objections to the contrary, *Diocef. tryal. Q.* 1.

4. For the Question it selfe, we hold that every believer (if possibly he can) is alwayes bound to joyne himselfe as a Member to some particular Congregation or other; and yet not because, else he is a Heathen and Publican, or out of possibilitie of salvation, as this Question suggests, but upon other grounds.

1. Because of the Commandment of God, *Cant.* 1. 8. *Matth.* 6. 10. 33.

2. Because willingly not to doe this is a secret disparagement to the wisdome of God that hath ordained Churches with giving power and privilegdes therunto, *Mat.* 18. 17. 1 *Cor.* 5. 4. and promises of his gracious presence to be with them and amongst them, *Mat.* 18. 20. *Rev.* 2. 1. *Exod.* 20. 24. Now to what end were all these, if believers should live and not joyne themselves to some Church? These priviledges and promises would in such case be all in vain, and the mercy of God offered therin, unthankfully neglected.

3. Volun-

Thirdly, voluntarily abstaining from joyning to the Church is noted and condemned as a sinne, *Heb.* 10.25. and a signe of fearefull unbelievers, *Act.* 5.13. of the rest durst no man joyne unto them.

Fourthly, good men in Scripture have been forward in practise this way, *Isay* 2. 2,3. *Zach.* 8. 23. *Act.* 2.41,42. and 9. 26. and have mourned with much bitternesse when they have been deprived of Liberty so to doe, *Isay* 56. 3. and *Ps.* 42. and 63. and 84.

Fiftly, this joyning is a part of that Order, and orderly walking which is required of believers, *Col.* 2. 5. 1 *Cor.* 14.40.

Sixtly, If Believers doe neglect this joyning, it is not onely a wrong to themselves, but also a great unkindnesse to God: for if one believer may doe this, why not another, and if two why not three, foure &c. and if all believers should doe thus, God should have no visible Churches upon Earth, unles he will acknowledge the Assemblies to be of *unbelievers* Churches: for as stones in the *Mountains* are not an house untill they be joyned together, though they be digged up out of the Quarry, and squared & hewn, and hereby are made fit to be joyned together, and so to become an house: so believers are not a Church till they be joyned in holy Covenant in some Congregation, though the worke of Grace and Faith in their soules have made them fit, and meete to be a Church of God, which is the House of the living God: or as the humane soule and body are not a man unlesse they be united: so Christian or believers are not a visible Church without visible union into some particular Congregation. Mr. *Perkins* having said that forth of the militant Church: there are no meanes of salvation, no preaching of Gods word, no invocation of Gods Name, no Sacraments, and therefore no Salvation; concludes with these words; For this cause every man must be admonished evermore to joyn himselfe to some particular Church, being a sound Member of the Catholick Church, *Expos.* of *Creed* in the Article of the Church; and Doctor Ames gives 6. Reasons, why every Christian should joyne himselfe to some particular Church or other *Cas. Conse.* L. 4. c. 24. Q. 1. and in another place he hath these words. *Illi igitur qui occasionem habent*

habent adjungendi seſe Eccleſiæ, & eam negligunt, graviſsimè peccant, non tantum in Deum ratione Inſtitutionis, ſed etiam in ſuas proprias animas ratione benedictionis adjunctæ, etſi obſtinatè perſiſtant in ipſa incuria, quicquid alias profitentur, vix poſſunt haberi pro fidelibus Regnum Dei verè quærentibus. Medul. Theol. *l.* 1. *c.* 32. *Sect.* 28.

To 13. First, whereas this 13th. Queſtion ſpeakes of private and illiterate perſons into a Church Body combined, wee looke at this as an incongruous expreſſion, if not a contradiction. For a company ſo combined as to make a Church, are not fitly called private, (though they be illiterate in reſpect of humane learning) in as much as a Church or a Church-body, eſpecially in times and places of peace and liberty, is a publike Congregation and ſociety: and the acts of Communion which they have among themſelves (ſuch as is the election and depoſing of Miniſters, whereof the Queſtion makes mention) are not private acts, but publike or people-like. Neither are literate or learned men therefore publike, becauſe they are indued with humane learning, unleſſe withall they be called to publike office or imployment in Church or Common-wealth: and therefore if illiterate be an *exegeſis* of private, we conceive that *exegeſis* is not good.

Secondly, whereas this Queſtion asketh, *Whether it be lawfull and convenient that ſuch a company ſhould themſelves ordinarily examine elect, ordain and depoſe their owne Miniſters?* if *ordinarily* be as much as *frequently*, we anſwer three things. First, that if one Church doe frequently come to ſuch actions, that is, to take in and put out the ſame men, this is not without ſuſpition of much levity and raſhneſſe in the people, or unfaithfulneſſe or unworthy walking in the Miniſters, or both; and therefore *ordinarily*, that is, *frequent* taking in and putting out againe in this manner, is as much as may be to be avoided. Secondly, when ſuch things doe often and frequently fall out, it is doubtleſſe a Judgement of God upon ſuch a people to have ſo many changes in their Miniſters; as was that of which it was ſaid, *three ſhepheards have I cut off in one moneth*, *Zach.* 11. 8. that People ſhould be ſo oft as

ſheep

sheep having no Shepheard; *for the transgression of a land many are the Princes thereof, Pro.*28.2. So in like sort for the transgressions of a Church many are the Ministers thereof; we meane when they have many Ministers, by the comming in and going out of the same men, or the removing of some and the taking in of others in their roome: for otherwise, it is a blessing of God, when a Church is furnished with variety of Ministers at the same time, *Acts* 13.1. & 21.18. *Phil.*1.1. Thirdly, yet this word (*ordinarily*) doth seeme to imply, that in your judgement sometimes this may be lawfull and convenient to be done; Now upon the same ground on which it may be done sometimes, upon the same it may be done at other times, if there be just occasion.

Thirdly, for the assistance of the Ministers of other Churches, of which this Question maketh mention, if this be onely by way of counsell or advice, we know nothing unlawfull or inconvenient in such assistance, because Churches are as Sisters one to another, *Cant.* 8.8. And therefore it is our practice in ordination of Ministers, as also in removall of them, to have such assistance. But for authority and power, we know none that Ministers have properly so called in any Congregation or Church, save that one over which the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers: and therefore we thinke it not lawfull nor convenient, when a Church is to ordaine Officers, to call in such assistance (*viz.* by way of authority or power) of the Ministers of other Churches.

Fourthly, we judge it lawfull and convenient that every Church of Christ (what ever their humane learning be, whether much or lesse) should elect and choose their Ministers: God doth not (for ought we know) give this power of calling their owne Ministers unto such Churches as have many learned men in them, and deny it unto others; but gives it indifferently to every Church, as they are a Church, and so to one Church as much as to another. If we thought you doubted whether the power of calling Ministers were given by Christ unto the Church, we might here alledge many Reasons for it; but this being the constant judge-

ment of the eminent Lights of this age, and the former who have been ſtudious of Reformation, wee muſt hope (till we hear to the contrary) that your ſelves do not differ from them in this point. As for us, thoſe grounds and reaſons from the holy Scripture which are alledged by 1 *Calvin*, 2 *Zanchius*, 3 Mr *Cartwright*, 4 Dr *Ames*, and (5) others doe ſatisfie us in this particular. (1) *Inſtitut.* 4.3.14. 15. (2) *De redemp. in* 4.*pracep.p.*1015.1016. &c. who alledgeth *Bucer* and *Muſculus*. (3) 1.*Reply p.* 44.*&c.* (4) *Medul. Theol.l.*1.*c.*21.*Sect.*30 *& caſ.conſc.lib.*4.*c.*25.*Q.*5. (5) *Demoniſt.of diſc.c.*4.

Fifthly, as for that objection which ſeemes to be implyed in the word *illiterate*, that it ſhould not be lawfull or convenient for a body to chooſe their owne Miniſters, becauſe they are illiterate, or want men of humane learning among them, wee further anſwere thereto; firſt, that among us when a company are to be combined into a Church-body, (as you ſpeake) there is uſually one or other among them who doe not want all humane learning, but have been trained up in Univerſities, and uſually have been Miniſters and Preachers of the Word in our native Countrey, and approved by the godly there; and are here by the company that doe ſo combine intended to be choſen afterwards for Paſtors or Teachers: and accordingly, after the Church is gathered, are in due time elected and ordained into their places. Secondly, but yet if there were none ſuch among them at their firſt combining and uniting, we doe not ſee how this could hinder them of liberty to chooſe Miniſters to themſelves afterward, when God ſhall ſend any to them that may be fit for the worke; becauſe this is a liberty that Chriſt hath purchaſed for them by his precious bloud, and they that are fit matter to bee combined into a Church-body, are not ſo illiterate but they have learned the Doctrine of the holy Scripture in the fundamentall points thereof; they have learned to know the Lord and their owne hearts, they have learned Chriſt, the need they have of him, and of all the meanes of enjoying him, the worth that is in him, and the happineſſe laid up for them in him: and

therefore

therefore they may not be reproached as illiterate or unworthy to choose their owne Ministers: nay, they have the best learning, without which all other learning is but madnesse and folly, and science falsly so called, 1 *Tim.*6.20. and indeed of none account with God, nor available for direction and guidance in the affaires of the house of God, such as is this election of Ministers, nor for the salvation of the soule in another world, 1 *Cor.*1.19 20. & 2.14. *Job* 32.8.9. though it may be, and is very usefull therewith. Thirdly, you know, and (we doubt not) doe abhorre as much as wee the spirit of those men that are proud of their owne learning, and vilified Believers in Christ for want thereof, saying, *Doe any of the Rulers, or of the Pharisees believe in him? but this people which know not the Law are cursed,* John 7.47. 48.49.

First, a company of fourty persons, or twenty, or lesse, is *To* 14. not such a small company, but they may be a Church properly and truely so called, if there be nothing against them but this, *that such a number may seeme not sufficient*: We do not finde that God doth any where say, they must be above fourty, or else they cannot be a Church; and therefore no mortall man can justly say it: Nay, rather that speech of Christ, of *two or three gathered together in his name, Matth.* 18.20. doth plainly imply that if there be a greater number then two or three, whom they being not satisfied in the answere of an offendor may appeale unto, and in so doing tell the Church, such a small number may be a Church, and may have the blessing of his presence to be among them. Besides, the time hath been, in the dayes of *Adam* and *Noah*, when there was not fourty persons in the world, and yet *Adams* family in his time, and *Noahs* in his, was in those dayes a Church, if there was any Church on earth. And if Christ and his twelve Disciples were the first Christian Church, it is too much for any man to say, that twenty or fourty is such a small company that they cannot be a Church.

Secondly, for the matter of Government, there is a difference between ability and right: In respect of the former,

in as much as ſome caſes are more difficult then others, and ſome Churches of leſſe ſpirituall abilities then others, and God doth not afford aſsiſtance and direction at ſome times ſo much as at others; therefore in ſuch caſes it is requiſite that Churches ſhould ſeeke for light, and counſell, and advice from other Churches: as the Church at *Antioch* did ſend unto the Church at *Ieruſalem* in a Queſtion, which could not bee determined among themſelves, *Act.* 15.2. But this is not becauſe they have no right, but when they are not able.

Thirdly, as for right, let it be conſidered how the Church at *Antioch* did long endevour to have ended that matter amongſt themſelves, before they determined to ſend to *Ieruſalem*, verſ.2. which ſhewes that they had power or right to have tranſacted that buſineſſe among themſelves, if ability had ſerved; or otherwiſe, that endevour had been ſinfull, as being a preſuming to doe that, whereunto they had no right. We conceive then that every Church, properly ſo called, though they be not above fourty, or twenty perſons, or ten, or the leaſt number that you mention, have right and power from Chriſt to tranſact all their owne Eccleſiaſticall buſineſſes among themſelves, if ſo be they be able, and carry matters juſtly, and according to the Rules of the Word. The power of the Keyes, *Matth.*16.19. among other things noteth Miniſteriall or delegated power of Government; and this power is committed by Chriſt unto the Church, as may appeare, if wee conſider, firſt, to whom Chriſt directed his Speech in that place of Scripture; not to *Peter* alone, but to all the Diſciples alſo, for to them all the Queſtion was propounded by Chriſt, *verſ.*15. And *Peter* anſwered in all their names.

Secondly, that he and they were not then looked upon as Apoſtles, or generall officers of all Churches (for that Commiſſion was not yet given them) but as Diſciples and Beleevers, believing with the heart, and confeſſing with the mouth Jeſus Chriſt, the rocke upon whom the Church is built; wherein as they did repreſent all Believers, ſo in *Peter* and the reſt, the Keyes are committed to all Believers that ſhall joine together in the ſame confeſſion, according

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to the order and ordinance of Christ. And therefore afterward this power of Government is expressly given to the Church, *Matth.*18.17. according hereunto in that description of the visible Church, as it is instituted by Christ in the new Testament, *Rev.*4. The members of the Church are seene by *John* in a vision sitting on thrones, cloathed with white rayment, having on their heads Crownes of Gold, *vers.*14. Now Thrones and Crownes are ensignes of authority and power, to note unto us that authority and governing power, which is committed by Christ unto the Church. Doctor *Fulke* hath this saying; *The Keyes of the Kingdome of Heaven (whatsoever they are) be committed to the whole Church, and not to one person onely, as Cyprian, Augustine, Chrysostome, Jerome, and all the ancient Doctors (agreeably to the Scriptures) doe confesse, against the* Popes *pardons* chap.3. P.381. And elsewhere he saith; The authority of Excommunication pertaineth to the whole Church, although the judgement and execution thereof is to be referred to the Governours of the Church; which exercise that authority, as in the name of Christ, so in the name of the whole Church whereof they are appointed Governours, to avoid confusion: against the *Rhemists* on 1 *Cor.*5. *Sect.*3.

And Doctor *Whitaker* hath these words: *Hoc est quod nos dicimus Petrum gessisse personam omnium Apostolorum; quare hanc promissionem non uni Petro, sed toti Ecclesiæ factam esse, & totam Ecclesiam in illo claves accepisse. De pontif. Roman. Q.2.c.4. Sect.* 17. And in that Booke hee is pregnant and plaine in this, that by the Keyes is meant all Ecclesiasticall power and Jurisdiction, and that these Keyes are given in *Peter* to the whole Church: The same is also taught by Master *Parker Polit. Eccles. l.3.c.*1.2.3.4.5.6. where he proves by many Arguments, that every visible Church (which hee acknowledgeth to be no other but a particular congregation) hath the power of all Eccleſiasticall Government and Jurisdiction commited to it by Christ Jesus; and answereth many Objections to the contrary: And page 2 of that third Book, making mention of foure Opinions concerning those words of the Keyes, and power of binding and loosing

Matth. 16. 19. the first of them that understand the Pope onely to be meant thereby, as *Peters* succeslour: the second of them that understand it of the Diocesan Bishop: The third of them that understand those words as meant of the Ministers, but the Ministers alone: The fourth of them that understand *Peter* to represent the Church in that place, and therefore that that promise is made unto the Church: Of these he refuseth the three first as unsound, and maintaines the fourth as onely agreeing to the truth. And Master *Baine* saith, Every Church by Christs institution hath power of Government, *Dioces. Tryall Quest.* 1. *p.* 8. And hee tells us page 11. what hee meant by Church: The word Church (saith he) wee understand here not figuratively tataken Metonymically for the place, Synecdochecally for Ministers administring ordinances; but properly, for a body politicke standing of People to be taught and governed, and of Teachers and Governours: So that in his judgement every Church (properly so called) hath power of Government within it selfe: and by these words of his it may also be concluded, that all power of Government is not in the Elders alone, for the power of Government by Church institution is in every Church properly so called; But Ministers are not a Church in propriety of speech, but onely figuratively by a synecdoche; And therefore all power of Government is not in the Ministers alone, but a Church properly so called is the Body politique, consisting of people and Ministers: But of this more may bee said in the next Question.

Fourthly for the matters of Independency, whereof this *Question* also makes mention: We doe confesse the Church is not so independent but that it ought to dep nd on Christ both for direction from the rules of his holy Word. *Ioh.* 10. 27. *Act.* 3. 23. and for the assistance of his holy Spirit, to discerne those rules, and to walke according to them when they shall be discerned, *Ioh.* 15. 5. and 16. 13. but for dependency upon men, or other Churches, or other subordination unto them in regard of Church Government or power, Wee know not of any such appointed by Christ in his Word. Our Saviours words are plaine, *If a man heare not*

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the Church, let him be to thee as an Heathen *or* Publican. And his promise unto his Church is plaine also, that *whatsoever they shall binde on earth, shall be bound in Heaven, &c. Mat.* 18. 17. &c. And the Apostle bids the Church deliver the impenitent sinner unto *Satan*, 1 *Cor.* 5. 4, 5, 6. Now when the man upon the Churches censure comes to be in case as an *Heathen* or *Publican*, yea becomes bound in Heaven as well as bound in earth, and also delivered unto *Satan*, this seems to us to be such a firme ratification of the Churches censure, as leaves no roome for any other Ecclesiasticall power on earth to reverse or disanull the same, and so takes away that kinde of dependency and subordination of Churches. *Nos plane dicimus Ecclesias initiò regi solitas esse à suis pastoribus, sic quidem ut nullis essent externis, aut Ecclesijs, aut Episcopis subditæ, non Colossensis, Ephesina, non Philippensis, Thessalonicensi, non hæ Romanæ, nec Romana cuiquam, sed paris omnes inter se juris essent, id est, sui omnes juris et mancipij Whitak. de Pontif. Roman. Question* 1. *Chapter* 1. *Section* 3. That is in summe. The Churches were not dependent and subordinate to others, but all of them absolutely free, and independent. Wee affirme saith Master *Baine*, that all Churches were singular Congregations equall in dependent each of other in regard of subjection, Diocesse tryall. *Q.* 1. *pag.* 13. The twentieth Chapter of Mr. *Parker* his third Booke of *Eccles. Politie*, hath this Title *De summitate Ecclesiæ particularis*. And the Title of the 21. is, *De paritate Ecclesiarum*, where he openeth and explaineth, and by many Arguments and Testimonies confirmeth what we hold of the independency and paritie of Churches, to which learned discourse of his, we referre you for further satisfaction in this point.

To 15.

Wee doe believe that Christ hath ordained that there should be a Presbytery or Eldership, 1 *Tim.* 4. 14. And that in every Church, *Tit.* 1. 5. *Acts* 14. 23. 1 *Cor.* 12. 28. whose worke is to teach and rule the Church by the Word and lawes of Christ, 1 *Tim.* 5. 17. and unto whom so teaching and ruling, all the people ought to be obedient and submit themselves, *Heb.* 13. 17. And therefore a Government meerly Popular or Democraticall (which Divines and Ortho-

thodox Writers doe so much condemne in *Morillius*, and such like) is farre from the practice of these Churches, and we believe farre from the minde of Christ.

Secondly, nevertheless a Government meerely Aristocratical, wherein the Church government is so in the hands of some *Elders* as that the rest of the body are wholly excluded from entermedling by way of power therein, such a government we conceive also to be without Warrant of the Word, and likewise to be injurious to the people, as infringing that liberty which Christ hath given to them in choosing their owne Officers, in admitting of Members, and censuring of offendors, even Ministers themselves when they be such; as the Church of *Colosse* must admonish *Archippus* of his duety, *Col.* 4. 17. Master *Parker* you know hath 22. Arguments to prove the superiority of the Churches over and above her officers, *Polit. Eccles. lib.* 3. *cap.* 12. And Master *Baine* saith, If the Church have power by election to choose a Minister, and so power of instituting him, then of destituting also: *Instituere & destituere ejusdem est potestatis*, Dioces. Triall P. 88. And againe, no reason evinceth the Pope, though a generall Pastors subject to the censure of a Church oecumenicall, but the same proveth a Diocesan Bishop, (and wee may adde, and a Congregationall Minister) subject to the censure of the particular Church, *pag.* 89. And whereas it might be objected, then may Sheep censure the Shepherd; Children their fathers, which were absurd. To this he answereth, that similitudes hold not in all things, naturall Parents are no waies Children, nor in state of subjection to their Children: but spirituall fathers are so fathers, that in some respects they are children to the whole Church. So Shepherds are no waies Sheep, but Ministers are in regard of the whole Church. 2. Parents and Shepherds are absolutely Parents and Shepherds, bee they good or evill, but spirituall Parents and Pastors are no longer so, then they do accordingly behave themselves *p.* 89. (To the same purpose and more at large is this Objection answered by Master *Parker*, Polit. Eccles. *l.* 3. *c.* 12. *p.* 78. 79. And againe, if their owne Churches have no power over them, it will be hard to shew wherein others

have

have such power of Jurisdiction over persons who belong not to their owne Churches, *p.* 89. So that all power is not in the Officers alone, seeing the Officers themselves, if they offend, are under the power of the Church. Even *Paul* himselfe though an extraordinary Officer, yet would not take upon him to excommunicate the incestuous person, without the Church, but sends to them exhorting them to doe it; and blames them because they had not done it sooner, 1 *Cor.* 5. which shewes that the exercise of all Church power of government, is not in the Officers alone: And therefore the *Lord Iesus* reproving *Pergamus* and *Thyatira* for suffering *Balaamites*, *Nicholaitans*, and the woman *Iezebel* among them, and calling on them for reformation herein, *Rev.* 2. sends his Epistle, not onely to the Angels of those Churches, but also to the Churches, or whole Congregations, as appeareth *Rev.* 1. 11. And also in the conclusion of those Epistle, where the words are, let him that hath an eare heare what the spirit saith, (not onely to the Angels) but unto the Churches; whereby it appeares, that the suffering of these corrupt persons and practises, was the sinne of the whole Church, and the reforming of them, a duty required of them all. Now the reforming of abuses in the Church, argues some exercise of Church government, as the suffering of them argues some remissenesse therein; and therefore it followes, that some exercise of Church government was required of the whole Church, and not all of the Angels alone. Sure it is the whole Congregation of *Israel* thought it their duty to see to the reforming of abuses, when they appeared to spring up amongst them, as appeareth by their behaviour & practise when the two Tribes and an halfe had set up the Altar upon the bankes of *Jordan*, *Ios.* 22. for it is said, that the whole Congregation of the Children of *Israel* gathered themselves together at *Shilo*, to go up to warre against them, *v.* 12. And when *Phineas* and ten Princes with him, were sent to expostulate with them about the matter, it was the whole Congregation that sent them, *v.* 13, 14. And when they delivered their Message they spake in the name of the whole Congregation, saying, Thus saith the whole congregation of the Lord, what trespasse is this? &c. *v.* 16.

which plainely declares, that the whole congregation (and not the Elders or Rulers alone) thought it their duty to ſee abuſes reformed and redreſſed, which could not be without ſome exerciſe of government. And when *Achan* the Sonne of *Carmi* had committed a treſpaſſe in theaccurſed thing, *Ioſ.* 7. it is counted the ſinne of the whole congregation, and ſuch a ſinne as brought a Plagué upon them all: for it is ſaid the children of *Iſrael* committed a treſpaſſe in the accurſed thing, *v.* 1. And God ſaith to *Ioſhua* (not the *Elders* have ſinned, but) *Iſrael* hath ſinned, and they have tranſgreſſed my Covenant, and they have ſtolne of the accurſed thing, and put it among their owne ſtuffe. *v.* 11. And for this, wrath fell on all the congregation of *Iſrael*, and that man periſhed not alone in his iniquity, *Ioſh.* 22. 20. Now why ſhould not he have periſhed alone, but wrath muſt fall upon them all? and why ſhould his ſinne, be the ſinne of all the congregation, if the care of preventing it, and timely ſuppreſsing the ſame, (which could not be without ſome exerciſe of Church government) had not bin a duty lying upon all the whole congregation, but upon the Elders and Officers alone? doubtleſſe the juſt Lord, who ſaith, every man ſhall beare his owne burden, *Gal.* 6. 5. would not have brought wrath upon all the congregation for *Achans* ſinne, if ſuch government as might have prevented, or timely reformed the ſame, had not belonged to the whole congregation, but to the *Elders* alone. And before this time all the children of *Iſrael* (and not the *Elders* alone) are commanded to put Lepers and uncleane perſons out of the Campe, *Numb.* 5. 1, 2. By all which it appeareth, that all exerciſe of Church Government is not in the *Elders* alone, but ſome power is in the people.

And elſe-where he counts it no Sacriledge for Members of the Church, though not in office, to handle thoſe keyes, *Mat.* 16. but rather a frivolous thing to thinke otherwiſe; *Quaſi abſque ſacrilegio*, ſaith he, *tractare claves privati nequeant, qui eas privatim tractare jubeantur. Quoties fratres ſuos admonere, conſolari, et ædificare. Imò verò eſt & publica clavium tractatio quam plebs Chriſtiana in unum coacta ſine ullo ſacrilegio miniſtrat*, 1 Cor. 5. *Polit. Eccleſ. l.* 3. *c.* 2. *p.* 8. And yet this is not a ſingular

ſingular conceit of his or ours, but the concurrent judgement of many worthy witneſſes of the truth in theſe latter dayes, who do with great conſent hold the Eccleſiaſticall government to be of a mixt form compounded of all three Eſtates, and that the people are not to be wholly excluded "from having any thing to do therein. *Si velimus Chriſtum* "*ipſum reſpicere, fuit ſemper Eccleſiæ Regimen monarchicum: Si* "*Eccleſiæ preſbyteros, qui in Doctrina et diſciplina ſuas partes* "*agebant, Ariſtocraticum: ſi totum corpus Eccleſiæ quatenus in Ele-* "*ctione Epiſcoporum et preſbyterorum ſuffragia ferebat, ita tamen* "*ut* εὐταξία *ſemper à preſbyteris ſervaretur, Democraticum: Sic* "*partim Ariſtocritum partim Democraticum, partim etiam Monar-* "*chicum eſt, ſemperque fuit Eccleſiæ Regimen,* Whita. *de pontif.* "Rom. Qu. 1. *c.* 1. *ſect.* 2. The Church (ſaith Mr. *Cart-* "*wright*) is governed with that kinde of Government, "which the Philoſophers that write of the beſt Com-"mon-wealths affirme to be the beſt. For in reſpect of "Chriſt the head it is a Monarchy, and in reſpect of the "Ancients and Paſtors that Governe in Common, and "with like Authority among themſelves, it is an Ariſto-"craty, or rule of the beſt men; and in reſpect that the peo-"ple are not ſecluded, but have their intereſt in Church "matters, it is a Democraty, or popular State, 1 *Reply p.* 51. And when Dr. *Whitegift*, from the Doctrine of the Authors of the Admonition would infer this conſequence, *viz.* that then the more that ruled the better eſtate it ſhould be, and ſo the popular ſtate ſhould be the beſt: In Anſwer "hereunto he ſaith, I have ſpoken of this before, where I "declared, that the mixed eſtate is beſt, both by the exam-"ple of the Kingdome of Chriſt, and alſo of this our "Realme, *pag.* 181. 182. And againe, whereas Mr. Dr. "ſaith, that Excommunication, and conſequently Abſolu-"tion or reſtoring to the Church again, pertaineth only to "the Miniſter: it remaineth that I ſhew that the *Preſbytery* "or *Elderſhip*, and the whole *Church* alſo, hath intereſt in the "excommunication, and conſequently in the abſolution or "reſtoring unto the Church againe, *p.* 183. And "againe, it is certaine Saint *Paul* did both underſtand and "obſerve the rule of our Saviour Chriſt (*viz.* that rule,

" *Mat.* 18. *Tell the Church*) but he communicateth this " power of Excommunication with the Church: and " therefore it must needs be the meaning of our Saviour " Christ, that the Excommunication should be by many, " and not by one, and by the Church, and not by the Mi- " nister of the Church alone, for hee biddeth the Church " of *Corinth* twise in the first Epistle, once by a Metaphor, " another time in plaine words, that they should Excom- " municate the Incestuous person. And in the 2d. Epistle, " understanding of the Repentance of the man, he intreat- " eth them that they would receive him again: And ther- " fore considering that the Absolution of the Excommu- " nication doth pertain unto the *Churches*, it followeth that " the excommunication doth in like manner appertainunto " it, *p.* 184. And again that the Ancients had the ordering of " these things, and that the peoples consent was required, " & that the *Ministers* did not take upon them of their own " Authority to Excommunicate, *&c.* It may appeare al- " most in every page of *Cyprians Epistles*. In *Augustines* time " it appeareth also, that that consent of the Church was " required, *p.* 187.

To these may be added, Mr. *Fenner*, who speaking of the Ecclesiasticall Presbytery, and of the businesse which the Presbytery is to deale in, which hee distinguisheth into judiciarie, as deciding of doubts, and dispencing of Censures. and extrajudiciary, as Election, Ordination *&c.* hath these words, *Atque hæc sunt negotia quæ præstari debent: In quibus per omnes Ecclesias summa Ecclesiastica potestas presbyterio demandata est, ita tamen ut in his quæ maximi sunt momenti, et ad ecclesiæ totius bonum vel ruinam maxime spectant, post προβούλευσιν suam de his captum consilia Ecclesiæ denunciantur, ut si quid habeant quod consulant vel objiciant in medium proferant: postea, autem auditis et assentientibus (nisi ad majorem Senatum negotium deferri fuerit, necesse ad turbas vitandas sive componendas, quod tum cum Major pars Ecclesiæ dissentit, faciendum est) decernenda et pro decretis Ecclesiis proponenda sunt*, and then he declares what hee meanes by those matters *maximi momenti, viz.* excommunication, absolution, elections, and deposings of *Ministers*, and such like, *Sacra The. lib.* 7. *c.* 7. wherin he plainly sheweth, that though the power

of

of the Presbytery be very great yet in things ofgreatest moment, as Censures and Elections, the people if they have any thing to counsell or object, have liberty to bring it in; and afterwards matters are to be concluded when they have bin heard speake, and have given their consent, for which liberty and power of the people, he bringeth these Scriptures, 2 *Chro.* 30. 23. *Acts* 1. 15. 23. 26. 1 *Cor.* 5. 4. & 2 *Cor.* 1. 6. 7. *Zanchius* speaking of that Question, *per quos exercere debet excommunicatio*, answers thus, *nempe per Ecclesiam, seu per ministros Ecclesiæ nomine, eoque et cum consensu totius Ecclesiæ Promissio illa, Quacunq; ligaveritis, ad totam Ecclesiam est facta*, Ergo &c. *Præterea Apostolus hoc expressius declaravit*, 1 Cor. 5. *congregatis vobis, &c. alloquebatur autem totam Ecclesiam. Patres idem docent: Cyprianus ad Cornelium Rom. Episcopum scribit se multum laborasse apud plebem, ut par daretur lapsis pœnitentibus: Si ergo non erat unius Episcopi cum suo Presbyterio solvere quempiam, sed requirebatur plebis eoque totius Ecclesiæ consensus: Ergo neque ligari quispiam poterat, id est Excommunicari, sine totius Ecclesiæ consensu. Augustinus etiam contra Donatistas ait, supersedendum esse excommunicatione Quando tota plebs laborant eodem morbo, Quid ita? causam adfert, Quia inquit, non assentientur excommunicationi, &c. Satis aperte docet tunc temporis non solitum fuisse excommunicationem ferri in Quempiam sine totius Ecclesiæ consensu; et ratio est in promptu, Quæ enim ad omnes pertinent eum consensu omnium fieri debent: Ergo sine totius Ecclesiæ consensu excommunicari nemo debet.* And then comparing the Government of the Church, to the Roman Common-wealth which had the Dictators, the Senate and the Quirites, and shewing that the Church government in respect of Christ is a Monarchy, in respect of the Presbyters an Aristocratie, and in respect of the people a Democratie, he concludes thus, *In rebus igitur gravissimis, quæ ad totum corpus pertinent, uti est Excommunicatio, sine consensu et authoritate totius Ecclesiæ nihil fieri debet, de Redempt. in præ c. 4. pag. 983. &c.* *Calvins* words are these, *Cyprianus cum meminit per quos suo tempore exerceretur* (viz. *potestas jurisdictionis*) *adjungere solet totum Clerum Episcopo, sed alibi quoque demonstrat, sic præfuisse clerum ipsum, ut plebs interim à cognitione non excluderetur, sic enim scribit; Ab initio Episcopatus mei statui sine Cleri consilio & plebis*

consensu nihil agere, Instit. 1.4.*c.* 11. *Sect.* 6. And againe, *Hoc addo, illam esse legitimam in excommunicando homine progressionem quam demonstrat Paulus, si non soli Seniores seorsim id faciant, sed conscia & approbante Ecclesia, in eum scilicet modum, ut plebis multitudo non regat actionem, sed observet, ut testis & custos, ne quid per libidinem à paucis geratur, Instit. l.* 4. *c.* 12. *Sect.* 7. Those Ministers that penned the Christian and modest offer of disputation, doe say, That the Pastor and Elders that exercise Ecclesiasticall Jurisdiction, ought not to performe any maine and materiall Ecclesiasticall act, without the free consent of the congregation, in Propos. 8.

The Refuter of Doctor *Downams* Sermon for the superiority of Diocesan Bishops, is plaine and full also in this point, in *Part* 2. of his reply *p.* 104, 105, 106. where answering Doctor *Downam*, that counted it schismaticall novelty, that the forme of the Church Government should be holden in part to be Democrattcall, and that his Refuter for so holding was a *Browniſt* or *Anabaptiſt*; he not onely proves the power of the people from the Scripture, and delivers his owne judgement, that the Ecclesiasticall Government is of a mixt forme, compounded of all three Estates; but for the same tenent, and that the Church government is in part Democraticall or popular, he alledgeth the testimonies of the Centuries, of *Illyricus*, of Doctor *Fulke*, Doctor *Willet*, *Cyprian*, *Augustine*, *P. Martyr*, Dr *Whitaker*, and others: Master *Baines* his judgement we heard before in the former Question. *Vrsinus* speaking of that Question, *Quibus commissa est potestas clavium*, hath these words: *Quibus denunciatio verbi divini delegata est, iisdem & potestas illa clavium; quæ verò denunciatio fit in Ecclesiastica disciplina est totius Ecclesiæ, ad totam enim Ecclesiam pertinet disciplina & jurisdictio spiritualis, sed alio modo fit illa denunciatio in verbi divini ministerio, quam in Ecclesiæ judicio.* And then telling how this denunciation is done in the Ministery, and by the Ministers of the Word, he comes to declare how it is done in Church censures: *In Ecclesiastico judicio* (saith he) *gratiæ & iræ Dei non fit denunciatio ab uno aliquo privatim, sed à tota Ecclesia aut nomine totius Ecclesiæ ab iis qui ad hoc delecti sunt communi omnium consensu.* And a little after, answering objections brought against the use

uſe of Excommunication, he hath theſe words: *Poteſt concedi quod Chriſtus non intelligat Presbyterium* (viz. in that place *Matth.* 18. *Tell the Church*) *ſed propriè ſumat vocabulum Eccleſiæ ante Chriſtum Judaicæ, poſt Chriſtum Chriſtianæ: Sed in Eccleſiæ juriſdictione oportet aliquem eſſe ordinem, aliquos oportet eſſe conſtitutos ab Eccleſia, alioquin eſſet* ἀταξία. And ſpeaking of that Queſtion, *Quis ordo ſervari debeat in exercenda clavium poteſtate* (he ſaith) *principalis pars in excommunicatione eſt denunciatio, qua &c. atque hæc denunciatio qua quis excommunicatur non eſt penes Miniſtrum Eccleſiæ, ſed penes ipſam Eccleſiam, & ejus nomine fit, quia mandatum hoc à Chriſto datum eſt Eccleſiæ; nam ipſe ait expreſsè, Dic Eccleſiæ.* And finally, ſpeaking of abuſes tô be avoided, and cautions to be obſerved in Excommunication, he hath ſuch words in the fourth Propoſition, or Rule there annext, as doe declare it to be his judgement, that if Excommunication ſhould be paſſed by a few, without the conſent of the whole Church, ſuch proceedings would be both Oligarchy and Tyranny: *Attentem expendatum* (ſaith he) *à toto Presbyterio, probetur ab Eccleſia, non ſuſcipiatur privatâ authoritate, ne miniſterium Eccleſiæ convertatur in* ὀλιγαρχίαν *& Tyrannidem*, in his Comment upon the Catechiſme, in the place *De clavibus regni cœlorum.*

Pareus delivering certaine *poriſmata* or concluſions concerning Excommunication, hath this for the fifth of them, *Quòd excommunicandi poteſtas non ſit penes unum Epiſcopum, vel paucos paſtores, ſed penes Eccleſiam; proindelicet paſtores & presbyteri ordinis causâ primas habeant partes circa cenſuras Eccleſiaſticas, & per eos hæ adminiſtrentur; quod tamen citra conſenſum Eccleſiæ paſtores ad excluſionem procedere non debeant, alibi demonſtravimus in* 1 *Cor.* 5. And a little after, anſwering *Stapletons* objections, that would have the power of Excommunication to be in the Biſhop alone, he brings in the caſe of *Cyprian*, who could not abſolve the *Lapſi* without the people: *Cyprianus* (ſaith hee) *ad Cornelium Romanum Epiſcopum ſcribit, ſe multum apud plebem laboraſſe ut pax daretur lapſis, quam ſi per ſe dare potuiſſet, non erat cur adeo in perſuadenda plebe ſe fatigaſſet.* So that in the judgement of *Pareus* and *Cyprian* all power of Church government was not in the Presbyters, but

but ſome power was in the people.

Muſculus, although he thinke there be little uſe of Excommunication and Church diſcipline, where there is a Chriſtian Magiſtrate, yet when it is to be uſed, he would not have the people excluded from having any hand therein, as may appeare by thoſe words of his, where he ſpeakes *De diſciplina Eccleſiaſtica: Hiſce de rebus non conſtituet Miniſter ſuo proprio arbitratu, ſed erit ad inſtitutionem earum director, & adhibebit ſuffragia & conſenſum ſuæ plebis, ne quicquam invitæ Eccleſiæ imponatur. Denique curabit ut plebs ipſa viros graves, timentes Dei, ac boni teſtimonii deligat, quorum curâ & vigilantiâ diſciplina Eccleſiaſtica adminiſtratur, & ſi quid gravioris momenti accidat, ad ipſam Eccleſiam referatur: Loc. com. de Miniſtris verbi Dei, in tit. de poteſtate Miniſtrorum* p.377. And afterward, in the latter end of that place, comming to ſpeake of the deposing of unworthy Miniſters, he hath theſe words: *Quæritur hic per quos diſciplina iſta adminiſtrari debeat? Reſpondeo, primum Eccleſiæ populus poteſtatem habens elegendi dignum Miniſtrum, habet etiam (teſte Cypriano) poteſtatem indignum recuſandi: deinde qui Judices ſunt Cenſoreſque morum in Eccleſia ex officio tenentur redarguere peccantem Miniſtrum, ſi duobus aut tribus teſtibus fide dignis coram Eccleſia Dei convictus fuerit. Tertiò, iidem cum conſenſu & ſuffragiis plebis deponent Miniſtrum, vel ad tempus, vel in univerſum, vel excommunicabunt tandem juxta qualitatem peccati vel defectus illius*, p.429. Doctor *Ames* ſaith, *Poteſtas hujus diſciplinæ* (*viz.* of Excommunication) *quoad jus ipſum pertinet ad Eccleſiam illam in communi, cujus membrum eſt peccator: ad illos enim pertinet ejicere, ad quos pertinet primò admittere, & corporis totius intereſt ex æquo membrorum conſervatio vel amputatio, cum Eccleſiæ idcirco conſenſu (eoque Magiſtratu non permittente tantum, ſed & approbante & conſtituente) eſt executioni mandanda.* Medul. Theol. l. 1. c. 37. Sect. 26.

Laſtly, Maſter *Parker* obſerving a diſtinction betweene power, and the diſpencing of power; that the one is in the Church and the other in the Presbyters, hath theſe words: *Neque tamen diſpenſatio omnis, omneque exercitium eſt penes rectores ſolos, ſed juxtà temperamentum formæ partim Ariſtocraticæ, partim Democraticæ de mandatæ Rectoribus ſuis Eccleſiæ, quæ ipſa per ſe obire ſatis commodè nequit, retinente vero diſpenſationem illam*

in illudque exercitium quod & ipsi convenit, & pertinet ad ejus dignitatem, authoritatem, & libertatem à Christo donatam. Polit. Eccles. l. 3. c. 7. And elsewhere he saith, *Imo vero est & publica clavium tractatio, quam plebes Christiana in unum coacta, sine ullo sacrilegio administrat.* Polit. Eccles. l. 3 c. 2 p. 8.

These testimonies we thought good to produce in this Question, lest any should thinke that to give any Church power of Government to the people, were some singular opinion of ours, swerving from the truth, and disallowed by Orthodox Writers of the Reformed Churches; and no doubt but besides these here cited, the same is taught by others also, whom now we spare to alledge, intending onely these few for a taste instead of many.

2. And therefore when this Question demandeth whether we give the exercise of all Church power of government to the whole Congregation, or to the *Presbyters* thereof alone? Our Answer is, neither thus nor so, neither all to the people excluding the Presbytery, nor all to the Presbytery excluding the People. For this were to make the government of the Church either meerly Democraticall, or meerly Aristocraticall, neither of which we believe it ought to be.

3. Whereas this Question demandeth to know what acts of Government the Presbyters may doe more then any other may doe, and to have those particular acts mentioned: this seemeth to us to be a very large demand; for who is able to mention all the particular acts of government, which any one Governour may performe in his time, especially if he continue long in his place? But if your meaning in this Point be not of the Individualls, but of the species or kinds, yet even there also it is much to require the particular mentioning of all; yet to give you a taste take these. The calling of Assemblies and dismissing of the same againe; The ordinary preaching of the Word, which is done by way of Office; and being the peoples mouth unto God in Prayer; The dispensing of Baptisme, and the Lords Supper: The permitting of any to speak in an orderly way, and againe enjoining silence: The putting of matters to Vote, and pronouncing of sentence in the censure of offendors, or receiving

ceiving in of Penitents after their fall, and bleſsing of the people in the name of the Lord; Theſe are Acts of Church Government, which the Presbyters may doe according to the Word, and another member may not do without breach of Order and preſuming above his place.

4. It is alſo here demanded, what the Presbyters may do without the particular conſent of the reſt? To which wee anſwer, that when they doe what the Lord Chriſt (whoſe Stewards they are) by his word requires of them in their places, this ſhould not be without the conſent of the reſt, for the reſt of the Church ought to conſent thereto: Chriſts Sheep ought to heare his voice, *Iohn* 10. 27. and to obey them that ſpeak unto them in his name, *Heb.* 13. 17. And if any man ſhould in ſuch caſe willfully diſſent, the Church ought to deale with ſuch an one, for not conſenting to the will and waies of Chriſt, or elſe they ſhall all be guilty of the ſinfull diſſent of ſuch an one. So that this Paſſage (if it be meant of Presbyters doing their duty) without the conſent of the people, goes upon a ſuppoſall (in reſpect of the people) of that which never ought to be, neither are wee to ſuppoſe but that there may be rule when the *Elders* and Brethren doe not diſſent nor are divided one from another: The multitude of them that believed in the firſt Chriſtian Church at *Ieruſalem*, were of one heart and of one ſoule, *Act.* 4. 32. Yet none needs to doubt, but there was rule and Government amongſt them, when yet their agreement was ſuch, that the Apoſtles and Elders did nothing without the full conſent of the reſt. It is a miſerable miſtake either to thinke that in the Church of Chriſt the Elders and Brethren muſt needs diſſent one from another, or if they all conſent, that then there can be no ruling but againſt the peoples minde. They were none of the beſt Shepheards to their flocks unto whom the Lord ſaith, with force and rigour have you ruled them, *Ezech.* 34. 4. As for doing any thing in their places which the word of Chriſt, the Lord and Maſter of the Church, commandeth not, nor alloweth ſuch things, they neither ought to do nor ought the Church to conſent unto them if they ſhould; for that were to make themſelves partakers of their Rulers ſinnes, and ſo to bring

Judgement

Judgement upon them all, as when the Priests did wickedly beare rule, and the people loved to have it so, *Ieremiah* 5. 31.

5. Lastly, this Question demandeth how, and over whom in those Acts of Government, which are done by the Elders more then by other Members, or without the consent of the rest, the Presbyters doe rule in propriety of speaking more then the rest of the Congregation? wherein are sundry particulars.

1. How they rule? Whereunto wee answer, that neither the *Elders* nor the people doe rule with Lordly and Princely rule, and Soveraigne authority and power; for that is proper to Christ over his Church: who is the onely Lord, 1 *Cor.* 12. 5. And King and Lawgiver that is able to save and to destroy, *Isa.* 33. 23. *Psal.* 2. *Luk.* 19. 27. *Jam.* 4. 12. *The Elders are forbidden to be Lords over Gods heritage,* 1 *Pet.* 5. 3. *Or to exercise authority as the Kings and Princes of the earth doe,* Matth. 20. 25, 26. Luk. 22. 25, 26. They are not so to rule, as to doe what themselves please, but they must do whatsoever *Christ* hath commanded, *Mat.* 28. 20. Mr. *Baine* sheweth from these words there are diversities of Ministeries, but one Lord, 1 *Cor.* 12. 5. That it is contrary to the Scripture that there should be in the Church more Lords then one: (and saith he) look as great Lords have in their Houses Ministers of more and lesse honour, from the Steward to the Scullery, but no Lord-like or Masterlike power in any besides themselves: So is it with Christ and his Church, which is the House of God, wherein hee is the Lord, Apostles and others having more or lesse honourable services, but no Masterlike power over the meanest of their fellow servants: On *Ephes.* 1. 22. *p.* 395. and elsewhere he saith, no Minister of the Word hath any power but Ministeriall in the Church, the power of the Apostles themselves and *Evangelists* is called διακονία, *Acts* 20. 2 *Tim.* 4. Yea such a service as doth make the Ministers having it so servants, that they are no way Lords; many Ministers, one Lord; we preach Christ Iesus the Lord; our selves your servants for Iesus sake, *Dioces.* Tryall. *Q.* 2. *p.* 74. The Elders are to rule as Stewards, *Mat.* 24. 45. *Luke* 12.

42. As Shepheards, *Act.* 20. 28. As Captaines, guides, leaders or overseers, by going before the People, and shewing them the word and way of the Lord, 1 *Tim.* 3. 1. 5. & 5. 17. 1 *Thes.* 5. 12. *Heb.* 13. 17.

2. How they rule more then the rest of the Congregation do? Whereto the Answer is, that this is more then the rest of the Congregation doe in these acts, even as acting is more then consenting, and as it is more to be a Steward over of the House then one of the household, or to be a guide or leader, then to be guided or led.

3. Over whom they doe rule? even over the whole Church in generall, and every Member in particular, even all the flocke over which the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers, *Act.* 20. 28. 1 *Pet.* 3. 2.

To 16. The rule is expresse and plaine that women ought not to speake in the Church, but to be in silence, 1 *Cor.* 14. 34. 1 *Tim.* 2 11,12. And therefore they ought not to vote in Church matters; besides voting imports some kind of government, and authority and power: now it is not government and authority, but subjection and obedience which belongs unto women, by the rule, and so is the practice of women amongst us.

To 17. Church matters ought not to be determined meerly by multitude or plurality of Votes, but by rules from the word of Christ, whose will, (and not the will either of the Major, or Minor part of men,) is the onely rule and Law for Churches, *Iam.* 4. 12. *Isa.* 33. 22. *Mat.* 23. 8,9. *Exod.* 23. 2. 21, 22. For our practice among us, the Major part of the Church, yea usually the whole Church doth consent and agree in one minde, and one judgement, and so gives a joint unanimus Vote; and the rule requires it should be so *Rom.* 15. 6. and the example of the Primitive Apostolike Churches, where things were carried (nor meerly by the Major or Minor part, the rest dissenting, but) ὁμοθυμαδὸν, or with one accord, *Act.* 1. 14. & 2. 46. & 4. 24. & 5. 12. & 15. 25. So that in this sence, matters with us are carried according to the Vote of the Major part, that is, with the joint consent

sent of the whole Church, but yet because it is the minde of Christ. But it may be your meaning is in this *Question* to take it for granted that the Churches will be divided in their Votes, and to know what course we take at such times: But if Churches lay aside their owne affections, and give attendance to the rule, and be (as all Churches ought to be) men of humble spirits, and sincere, and withall depend on Christ their head and King for guidance, in their worke, we know no necessity of such a supposall, that they must needs be divided in their votes, especially considering what promises he hath made unto his Church, of godly concord and agreement among themselves, and of his owne gracious presence in the midst of them, *Ier.* 32. 39. *Zeph.* 3. 9. *Mat.* 18. 20. which promises we believe are not in vaine. Nevertheless we deny not but through the corruptions & distempers of men, some dissention may arise for a time in a true Church, as it was in the Church at *Corinth*: and if any such thing fall out among us (which we blesse God is not often) then before matters be put to the vote, our course of proceeding is after this manner. If the Elders and Major part of the Church consent in one conclusion, yet if any brother dissent, he is patiently heard, and his alledgements of Scripture or good reasons are duely weighed: If it appeare that his judgement is according to the rule, the whole Church will readily yeeld, though before they were otherwise minded. But if it appeare they who dissent from the Major part, are factiously or partially carried, the rest labour to convince them of their error by the rule, if they yeeld, the consent of all comfortably concurreth in the matter; if they still continue obstinate, they are admonished, and so standing under censure, their vote is nullified. If they without obstinate opposition of the rest, doe dissent still, yet referre the matter to the judgement of the Major part of the body, they are not wont to proceed to sentence (if the matter be weighty as in Excommunication) till the reasons on both sides have bin duly pondered, and all brotherly means have been used for mutuall information and conviction. If the difference still continue the sentence (if the matter be weighty) is still demurred, even till other Churches have

been consulted with, who in such a case will send their Elders to communicate their apprehensions and light, which they do not *pro imperio*, binding the Church to rest in their dictates, but by propounding their grounds from the Scripture. These courses with Gods presence and blessing (which usually accompanieth his Ordinance) faithfully taken and followed, will prevaile either to settle one unanimous consent in the thing, or at least to preserve peace in the Church by the dissentors submission to the judgement of the Major part, though they see not light sufficient to warrant them to act in the businesse: Such subjection is according to the rule, *Ephes.* 5. 21. 1 *Pet.* 5. 5. If the Church or the Elders should refuse the testimony of other Churches according to God, they will (after brotherly admonition and due patient waiting) deny them the right hand of fellowship, till they shall give better evidence of their subjection to the Gospel of Christ. But thanks be to God we never had occasion of such withdrawing communion of one Church from another, though now and then (as need requireth) Churches send to other Churches for their counsell and advice.

To 18. Meanes to preserve the Churches in unitie and verity, and to reforme any that may erre, thankes bee to God we have sundry. First, the holy Scriptures, which are a perfect rule for Doctrine and practise, 2 *Tim.* 3. 15 16. 2 *Pet.* 1. 19. *Psal.* 19. 7, 8. Secondly, the Ministery appointed by Christ, *viz.* of Pastors, Teachers, Elders, and Deacons, *Ephes.* 4. 11, 12. 1 *Cor* 12. 28. 1 *Tim.* 5. 17. 1 *Tim.* 3. 1, 2. *&c* and *vers.* 8. and in both these we have frequently holden forth unto us the Commandement of God, wherein he requires Churches to bee of one mind and one judgement in the truth, 1 *Cor.* 1. 10. & 2. 13. 11. *Ephes.* 4. 3. & *Phil.* 1. 27. & 2. 1, 2. and his promise to lead his people into all truth, and holy agreement therein, *Jer.* 32. 29. *Isa* 11 6, 7 &c. *Zeph.* 3. 9. *Ioh.* 16. 13. with many motives and Rules from Scripture for continuing in the said truth and love. Now Faith makes use of these promises, and submits to these precepts and exhortations, and so both these being mixt with Faith

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are profitable meanes by the blessing of God for that end aforesaid, *Heb.* 4. 2. as these Churches have found by experience, for these yeares since our comming into this Countrey: And any other meanes sanctified of God for the aforesaid end, we hope we should be glad with thankfull hearts to improve and make use of as the Lord shall help.

As for a Platforme of Doctrine and Discipline which you mention, as one meanes hereunto, if thereby you meane no more but a confession of Faith of the holy doctrine which is according to godlinesse, we know nothing but it may be lawfull and expedient in some cases for any particular person that hath received the gift to doe it; or any Church, or all the Churches in any Christian Common-wealth, to compile and set forth such a platforme. The practise of those Churches, whose Confessions are contained in that booke called *The harmony of Confessions*, as also of Master *Robinson* at *Leiden*, and others of our Nation in other parts in the *Low-countries*, who have published such platformes, we see no reason to condemne or disallow: neither count we it unlawfull or inexpedient for any Church or Churches, or person or persons in the countrey, upon just occasion to doe the like.

But if your meaning be of a platforme to be imposed by authority upon others, or our selves, as a binding Rule of Faith and practice, so that all men must believe and walke according to that platforme, without adding, altering, or omitting, then we are doubtfull whether such platformes be lawfull or expedient. For if the Doctrine contained therein doe in any particular swerve from the Doctrine contained in Scripture then the imposing of them is so far forth unlawfull; and if they be according to it, then they may seeme needlesse, in as much as the forme of wholesome words contained in Scripture is sufficient. Which reason against such Platformes, makes nothing against Sermons or Preaching, though Sermons must be according to the Doctrine contained in Scripture, because Preaching is an ordinance of God and therefore not needlesse; which we cannot say of such Platformes. Besides, as they are not necessary, so they may be a snare unto men, and a dange-

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rous temptation of attending more to the forme of Doctrine delivered from the authority of the Church, and the impoſers, then to the examining thereof according to the Rule of Scripture; and ſo their faith may by this meanes ſtand in the wiſedome or will of man, rather then in the power of God, as if men had dominion over their faith; which things ought not ſo to be, 1 *Cor.* 2. 5. & 2. 1. *ver.* Chriſtians have liberty from God to ſearch the Scriptures, and try all things, and hold faſt that which is good, *Act.* 17. 11. *Ioh.* 5. 39. 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 21. but the foreſaid impoſing of platformes and confeſsions compiled by men, doth ſeeme to abridge them of that liberty; and if it be any meanes of unity, yet it may be a dangerous hinderance of ſome verity and degree of truth as binding men to reſt in their former apprehenſions and knowledge, without liberty to better their judgement in thoſe points, and ſhutting the doore againſt any further light which God may give to his beſt ſervants, and moſt diſcerning, beyond what they ſaw at firſt: And therefore we doubt ſuch impoſed platformes are not lawfull, or at leaſt wiſe not expedient.

The conſociation of Churches into *Claſſes* and Synods we hold to be lawfull and in ſome caſes neceſſary; as namely in things that are not peculiar to one Church, but common to them all: And likewiſe when a Church is not able to end any matter that concernes onely themſelves, then they are to ſeeke for counſell and advice from neighbour Churches; as the Church at *Antioch* did ſend unto the Church at *Ieruſalem*, *Acts* 15. 2. the ground and uſe of *Claſſes* and Synods, with the limitations therein to be obſerved, is ſummarily laid downe by Doctor *Ames*, *Medul. Theol.* l. 1. *c.* 39. *Sect.* 27. unto whom we do wholly conſent in this matter.

But when you ſpeake of doing no weighty matter without the conſent and counſell of a *Claſſes*, we dare not ſo far reſtraine the particular Churches, as fearing this would be to give the *Claſſes* an undue power and more then belongs unto them by the Word; as being alſo an abridgment of that power which Chriſt hath given to every particular Church, to tranſact their owne matters (whether more or

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leſſe weighty) among themſelves (if ſo be they be able) without ſuch neceſſary dependence upon *Claſſes*, as we have ſhewed before in anſwer to *Q.* 14. *Sect.* 3. & 4. of that Anſwere. And Maſter *Parker* teſtifieth, that in *Geneva*, and in the *Low-countries*, where they have ſome uſe of *Claſſes*, yet it cannot bee ſaid that their particular Congregations are *abſque poteſtate omni in rebus grandioribus, ut in excommunicatione*; the particular Churches are not without power in the more weighty matters, as in Excommunication. *Polit. Eccleſ. li.* 2. *c.* 36. *Sect.* 11. *p.* 310. And Maſter *Baine* ſheweth the ſame, ſaying, They have power of governing themſelves, but for greater edification voluntarily confederate, not to uſe or exerciſe their power but with mutuall communion, one asking the counſell and conſent of the other, *Dioceſ. Triall Q.* 1. *p.* 21. And a little after *Geneva* made his conſociation, not as if the prime Churches were imperfect, and to make one Church by this union; but becauſe though they were intire Churches, and had the power of Churches, yet they needed ſupport in exerciſing of it, *&c.* which is the very ſame that wee ſaid before in *Q.* 14 *viz.* That all Churches have right of Government within themſelves, but ſome had need of counſell and advice of others, becauſe they are of leſſe ability to tranſact their owne matters of themſelves. And Maſter *Parker* in the ſame place afore alledged in the page immediately precedent, clearly ſheweth againſt Doctor *Downham*, Doctor *Sutcliffe*, and others, that thoſe particular Congregations which have Presbyters of their owne, with power within themſelves, are the moſt perfect, and are preciſely formed *juxta formam illam quæ in verbo patefacta eſt*, according to that forme which is revealed in the Word; whereas others which have not the like are more defective and imperfect. And if this be ſo, then to binde Churches to do no weighty matters without the counſell and conſent of *Claſſes*, were to binde them to bee imperfect. And for Synods, if they have ſuch power that their determination ſhall binde the Churches to obedience (as you ſpeake) it is more then we yet underſtand. Indeed *Bellarmine* makes Biſhops in a Councell or Synod to be Judges; and that *ſtantium ſit eorum*

rum ſententiæ, quia ipſi ſic ſtatuerunt, quomodo ſtatuit ſententia Prætoris in cauſis politicis; that is, either to obey or ſuffer: *de Concil. & Eccleſ. l. 1. c. 18.* But the Orthodoxe Writers do not conſent to him therein; for in their judgement the ſentence of a Councell or Synod is onely *inquiſitio quædam & dictio ſententiæ miniſtratoria & limitata, ita ut tantum valeat decretum Concilii quantum valeat ejus ratio*, as Doctor *Ames* hath it in his *Bellarminus enervatus*, upon that place of *Bellarmine*: that is, The ſentence of a Synod is onely a certaine enquiring and giving of ſentence by way of Miniſtery, and with limitation; ſo that the decree of the Councell hath ſo much force as there is force in the reaſon of it. And *Junius* expreſſeth it thus; *Sententia Concilii per ſe ipſam ſuaſionis non coactionis eſt judicium miniſteriale, non authoritatem, per ſe neceſſitatemque adferens, Animadverſ.* upon *Bellarmine* in that place: that is, The ſentence of a Councell is of it ſelfe onely of advice, not of compulſion or conſtraint, and brings with it a judgement miniſteriall, not authority of it ſelfe nor neceſsity; whereunto we doe wholly conſent. As for that clauſe in this Queſtion, *That the determination of a Synod ſhould binde if not to obedience, yet to peaceable ſuffering*, we know not what ſufferings thoſe ſhould be: for puniſhments in Purſe or Perſon, in reſpect of the body or outward man, are not to be inflicted by Synods, but by civill Magiſtrates; and Church-cenſures of Excommunication, or the like, belong to the particular Church of which an offendor is a member, out of the communion whereof a man cannot be caſt, but onely by his owne Church.

To 19. Onely Chriſt hath Authority to make Lawes for the government of each particular Church, and the Members thereof, and his lawes doe oblige all the Members, and may not be omitted without ſinne, *Jam.* 4. 12. *Iſa.* 33. 22. *Mat.* 23. 8, 9 10. *Act.* 3. 23. But for particular Churches, they have no power to make Lawes for themſelves or their Members, but to obſerve and ſee all their Members obſerve thoſe Laws which Chriſt hath given and commanded *Mat.* 28. 20. *Deut.* 33. 3. *John* 10. 27. If any Church ſhall preſume further, they goe beyond their Commiſsion, and in ſuch

ſuch caſe their Eccleſiaſticall Lawes may be omitted without ſinne, nay it would be ſinne to be ſubject to them *Col.* 2. 20. To walke after them, *Hoſ.* 5. 11. to be ſuch ſervants of men as not to ſtand faſt in the liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made us free, 1 *Cor.* 7. 23. *Gal.* 5. 1.

The outward calling of a Miniſter conſiſteth properly and eſſentially in election by the people, as Doctor *Ames* ſheweth, *Caſ. Conſ. l.* 4. *c.* 25. *Q.* 6. And this election is ſo eſſentiall, that without it the Miniſters calling (if you ſpeak of an ordinary Church officer) is a nullity; And therefore *Mornay*, that learned noble man of *France*, approveth that ſaying of *Chryſoſtome*, election by the people is ſo neceſſary, as that without it there is neither Altar, nor Church, nor Prieſt-hood, where (omitting other things) it appeares to be their judgement, that without election by the people, the Miniſtery is void; And *Mornay* addeth of his owne, concerning the Biſhops amongſt the Papiſts, that they were *nullâ planè χειροτονίᾳ, nulla proinde, χειροθεσίᾳ*, for the one preſuppoſed the other, no Impoſition ſeeing without election, in his booke of the Church, *c.* 11. *p.* 375. Yet ſometimes the peoples acceptance and approbation afterward may ſupply the want of election at the firſt, as *Iacobs* after conſent and acceptance of *Lea*, made her to be his wife, though hee choſe her not at the firſt. And by this we hold the calling of many Miniſters in *England* may be excuſed, who at firſt came into their places without the conſent of the people. *To* 20.

If ordination by impoſition of hands, were of the eſſence of a Miniſters calling then in thoſe Churches, where ſuch ordination is not uſed, their Miniſters ſhould want a lawfull calling, which were an hard ſentence againſt many Miniſters in *Scotland*, where (as is reported) this ordination is not thought neceſſary, and therefore uſed or omitted indifferently. Wee looke at Ordination by Impoſition of hands, as a ſolemne inveſting of men in o their places, whereto they have right and calling by election, like to the inauguration of a Magiſtrate in the Comm'on-wealth, yet neceſſary by divine Inſtitution. 1 *Tim.* 4. 14. But not ſo neceſſary as if the Miniſters calling were a nullity without

it. *Essentia ipsa vocationis in electione legitima consistit; Ordinatio pendet ab electione, sicut Coronatio Principis, aut Magistratus inauguratio, ab electione, successione, aut equivalente aliqua constitutione.* Ames Bellarm. enervat. *Lib.* 3. *de clericis, c.* 2. *Sect.* 3. That is, the essence of a Ministers calling consists in lawfull election, Ordination depends upon Election, as the Coronation of a Prince, or the Inauguration of a Magistrate, depends upon Election, Succession, or some other Constitution equivalent. And againe, *Ritus impositionis manuum non est absolute necessarius ad esse Pastoris, non magis quam Coronatio ad esse Regis, aut celebratio nuptiarum ad earum esse. sect.* 16. That is, the right of Imposition of hands is not absolutely necessary to the essence of a Pastor, no more then the Coronation to the essence of a King, or the Celebration of Marriage to the essence thereof.

To 21. Ordination of Ministers is not a private action but publique, and ought to be done publiquely in the Assembly of the Church, and therefore the persons that performe it, (whether they be ordinary Church Officers or no) cannot in any congruity of speech be called meere private persons in that Action.

2. The Church that hath no Officers, may elect Officers or Ministers unto themselves, therefore it may also ordaine them; which Argument Dr. *Whitaker* useth as wee shall see anon. If it have Commission and power from Christ for the one, and that the greater, it hath it also for the other which is the lesser: Now ordination is lesse then election, and depends upon it as a necessary Antecedent by divine Institution, by vertue of which it is justly administred, being indeed nothing else but the admission of a person lawfully elected into his Office, or a putting of him into possession thereof, whereunto he had right before by election, as was said before in answer to the precedent Question.

3. If a Church have Ministers or Elders before, then this ordination is to be performed by the Elders of the Church, and in their Assemblie, 1 *Tim.* 4. 14. as also many other acts are to be performed by them.

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4. This Ordination thus performed by the Elders for the Church, may fitly be called the Act of the whole Church, as it is the whole man that seeth, that heareth, that speaketh, when these acts are instrumentally performed by the eye, the eare, and the tongue, in which sense Master Parker saith, *Ecclesia per alios docet, baptizatque. Polit. Eccles. l. 3. c. 7. p. 26.*

5. But when a Church hath no Officers, but the first Officers themselves are to be ordained, then this Ordination by the Rite of imposing of hands may be performed for the Church by the most prime, grave and able men from among themselves, as the Church shall depute hereunto, as the children of *Israel* did lay their hands upon the *Levites*, *Numb.* 8. 10. Now all the Congregation could not impose all their hands upon them together, all their hands could not possibly reach them together, and therefore it must needs be that some of the Congregation in the name of the whole body performed this Rite: And as this Scripture sheweth, that the people may in some cases lay their hands upon Church Officers, (for the *Levites* were such, upon whom the children of *Israel* did lay their hands) so let it be considered, whether these reasons doe not further make it manifest.

1. Men that are in no Office may elect, therefore they may ordaine, because ordination is nothing else but the execution of Election.

2. If it were not so, then one of these would follow, either that the Officers must minister without any Ordination at all, or else by vertue of some former Ordination received in some other Church, or else they must be ordained by some other Minister or Ministers of some other Church, that were ordained afore them, and so the Ministery to be by succession. But the first of these is against the Scripture, 1 *Tim.* 4. 14. *Heb.* 6. 2. And the second were to establish the Popish opinion of the indeleble Character, imprinted as they imagine in their Sacrament of holy Orders. Whereas for ought we can discerne, if when they are called to Office in any Church, they have need of a new Election, notwithstanding their former election into another Church

then they have by the ſame ground need of a new Ordination, for Ordination depends upon Election: If their former Election be ceaſed, their former Ordination is ceaſed alſo; and they can no more miniſter by vertue of a former *Ordination* unto another *Church*, then by vertue of a former Election. And for the third, we doe not underſtand what authority ordinary Officers can have to ordaine Miniſters to ſuch a Church, of which themſelves are not ſo much as Members. Beſides, at ſome times, namely at the firſt Reformation after the times of Popery, there were no others to be had but from the Pope, and his Biſhops and Prieſts. Now it were a pittifull caſe, if the Sheep muſt have no Shepherd but ſuch as are appointed to them by the wolves, That is, if Gods people might not have Miniſters, but onely from the popiſh Biſhops. This were to ſay, either that the Miniſters of Antichriſt, muſt, or may ordaine Miniſters to the Church of Chriſt, or elſe that the popiſh Biſhops are true Miniſters of Chriſt. And if Proteſtants thinke it neceſſary, that their firſt Miniſters ſhould be ordained by the popiſh Biſhops, it is no marvell if the Papiſts do thereupon believe that their Church is the true Church, and their Biſhops true Miniſters. Such a ſcandall is it unto them to maintaine this perſonall ſucceſsion of the Miniſtery. But God doth ſo much abhorre *Antichriſt*, that hee would not have his people to ſeek to him, nor his Prieſts to ordaine Chriſts Miniſters, as he would not take of *Babilon* a ſtone for a Corner, nor a ſtone for a foundation, *Ier.* 51. 26.

3. It is thus in civill Corporations and Cities, the Major, Bayliffe, or other chiefe Officer elect, is at his entrance and inauguration to receive at the hands of his Predeceſſors the Sword or Keyes of the City, or to have ſome other ſolemne Ceremonie by him performed unto him, yet if either there be no former as at the firſt, or that the former be dead or upon neceſsity abſent, when his Succeſſor entreth, then is this Ceremony and worke performed by ſome other, the fitteſt Inſtrument; neither need that City borrow any Officer of another City, neither could he entermeddle there without uſurpation, though both the Corporations have the ſame Charter under the ſame King. And ſo it is in this

ſpiritual

ſpirituall Corporation or City, the Church of God.

4. That this point may ſeeme the leſſe ſtrange to you, we pray you conſider with us a little further the nature of this Ordination, and then wee will adde the Teſtimonies of ſome eminent Proteſtant Writers in this caſe, that you may ſee this is not any ſingular opinion of ours. For the former, ſome indeed have ſo highly advanced this Ordination, that they have preferred it farre above preaching the Word, miniſtring the Sacraments, and Prayer, making it and the power of Excommunication, the two incommunicable Prerogatives of a Biſhop, above an ordianary Miniſter; yet the Scripture teacheth no ſuch thing, but rather the contrary, for when the Apoſtles were ſent out by Chriſt, there was no mention of Ordination in that Commiſsion of theirs, but only of teaching & preaching & baptiſing *Mat.* 28. 19, 20. *Mark.* 16. 15, 16. If Ordination of Miniſters had bin ſuch a ſpeciall worke, there would belike have bin ſome mention of it in their Commiſsion. And certaine it is, the Apoſtles counted preaching the Word their principall worke, and after it Prayer, and the miniſtring of the Sacraments, *Act.* 6. 4. 1 *Cor.* 1. 17. If ordaining of Miniſters had bin in their account ſo prime a worke, it may ſeem *Paul* would rather have tarried in *Creete* to have ordained Elders there, then have gone himſelfe about preaching, leaving *Titus* for the other, *Tit.* 1 5. By all which it appeares, that ordaining of Miniſters is not ſuch an eminent work as that it is to be preferred above preaching the Word, and miniſtring the Sacraments, and therefore to be performed by them that are ſuperiours unto ordinary Miniſters; preaching and miniſtring the Sacraments, being left as inferiour workes unto Miniſters, of an inferiour ranke, as they would have it, that ſtand for the ſuperiority of Doceſan Biſhops; neither is it equall unto thoſe other workes afore mentioned, that onely he that doth thoſe, may performe this other alſo, as ſome others thinke; but being nothing elſe in the true nature and uſe of it but the execution and accompliſhment and confirmation of election, it may bee performed by the people of God, that yet have no Officers, even as Election may upon which it doth depend.

5. Laſtly,

5. Lastly, let these sayings of some Protestant Writers of singular note, either for holinesse, or learning, or both, be well considered of. Master *Perkins* saith, Succession of Doctrine alone is sufficient; for this Rule must bee remembred, that the power of the Keyes (that is, of order and jurisdiction) is tyed by God and annexed in the New Testament to Doctrine. If in *Turkey* or *America*, or elsewhere, the Gospel should be received by the counsell and perswasion of private persons, they need not send into *Europe* for consecrated Ministers, but they have power to choose their owne Ministers from within themselves; because where God gives the Word he gives the power also; *upon Gal* 1.11. Doctor *Willet* saith, Whereas *Bellarmine* objecteth that as in the old Law the Priesthood went by carnall generation and lineall descent from *Aaron*, so in the New it must bee derived by succession from the Apostles; we answere, first, that our Saviour Christ and his Apostles could shew no lineall descent from *Aaron*, neither had their ordination from his Successors, and yet were the true Pastors of the Church. And a little after, This we say further, that both before Christ there were true Pastors and Prophets, which were not ordained by the Priests of *Aaron*; and since Christ, that received not their ordination successively from the Apostles. First, in the old Law, when the ordinary Priesthood was corrupted, God raised up Prophets from other Tribes that received not from the Priests their ordination and allowance: such an one was *Amos*, who was among Heardsmen, and was made a Prophet as he was gathering wilde black-berries. After the same manner in the corrupt times of the Gospel, the Lord hath raised up faithfull Ministers to his Church, that could shew no succession from the degenerate Clergy. And a little after, If *Paul* were made an Apostle without the ordination of the lawfull Apostles much more may the Lord raise up new Pastors to his Church without ordination from the usurpers of the Apostles: *Synops. Papism. contr.* 2. *Q.* 3. *of Succession Error* 20. *p.* 81. *Morney* his words are full and plaine to the same purpose, *viz.* Although some of our men in such a corrupt state of the Church, as we have seene in our time, without waiting

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ing for calling or allowance of them who under the title of Paſtors oppreſſed the Lords Flock, did at firſt preach without this formall calling, and afterward were choſen and called to the holy Miniſtey by the Churches which they had taught; yet this ought to ſeeme no more ſtrange, then if in a free common-wealth the people without waiting either for the conſent, or for the voices of thoſe that tyrannize over them, ſhould (according to the Lawes) make choice of good and wiſe Magiſtrates, ſuch (happily) as God would ſerve his turne of for their deliverance, and for the publike reſtitution. And hereof wee have examples, firſt, in the *Acts*, where wee read that *Philip*, who was but a Deacon, preacheth in *Samaria* without the calling of the Apoſtles, yea without their privity, who for all that gave their allowance to his worke. In *Frumentius*, carried upon another occaſion into the *Indies*, a meere Lay-man, who yet there preacheth the Goſpel, and a good while after is there made Biſhop. In thoſe of whom *Origen* ſpeaketh, that ſhall come by chance into a City where never any Chriſtian was borne, ſhall there begin to teach, and labour to inſtruct the people in the Faith, whom the People ſhall afterward make their Paſtors and Biſhops: and beſides, in all the Scriptures there is not one place that bindeth the Miniſtery of the Goſpel to a certaine ſucceſſion; but contrariwiſe the Scripture ſheweth, that God would ſend two ſpeciall witneſſes to propheſie againſt Antichriſt: *Of the Church chap.* 11. *p.*371. Doctor *Whitaker* anſwering *Bellarmine*, that would prove Proteſtants to have no Church, becauſe their Miniſters had no Ordination by Biſhops, ſaith, That as ſometimes Biſhops were choſen by the Clergy and ſometimes by the People, ſo the ſame may be ſaid of Ordination, *viz.* that it was ſometimes by the Clergy, and ſometimes by the People; and then addeth, *Quod ſi vocationem eorum Epiſcoporum legitimam fuiſſe concedat Bellarminus, De ordinatione minus laboramus. Qui enim habent authoritatem vocandi, iidem etiam authoritatem ordinandi habent, ſi legitima ordinatio non poſsit impetrari: nam ordinatio ſequitur vocationem; qui vocatur, is quaſi in ſui muneris poſſeſſionem mittitur*: de Eccleſ. Q. 5. cap. 6 p. 510. Finally, Doctor *Ames* doth alſo witneſſe

the ſame in many places of his workes: for a taſte take theſe few ſayings of his in this caſe; *viz. Ad totam Eccleſiam ſemper pertinet ordinatio, quoad jus, vim, virtutem illam quam habet in Miniſtro Eccleſiæ conſtituendo; ſicut celebratio matrimonii vim aut virtutem omnem acceptam refert legitimo conſenſui conjugum: Eccleſiæ ſtatu (miniſterio & ordine deficiente) collapſo vel corrupto, à plebe etiam actus iſte ordinationis, quatenus neceſſarius eſt ad Miniſtri conſtitutionem in tali caſu, poteſt legitimè exerceri,* Bellarm. enervat. lib. 3. de clericis, cap. 2 de ordinatione. And againe, a little after; *Epiſcopos veros à veris Epiſcopis ordinariè dicimus ordinandos eſſe, ſed nomine Eccleſiæ cui ordinantur.* And againe, a little after, *Poteſtas ordinandi eſt aliquo modo originaliter in tota Eccleſia, ſicut poteſtas videndi originaliter eſt in toto animali, quamvis formaliter & ſubjectivè ſit in oculo tantùm; tum etiam ordinationis exercitium pendet à tota Eccleſia, ſicut actus videndi hoc vel illud determinatè pendet non ab oculo ſed à toto.* And againe, *Quamvis in Eccleſia benè conſtituta non debeat aliis quam presbyteris ordinandi manus mandari; in defectu tamen idoneorum presbyterorum poteſt non presbyteris mandari.* And yet againe in the next place, *Si concedatur hoc, quòd ex ordine nemo poſſit eſſe legitimus paſtor, niſi ſit à legitimo Paſtore & Epiſcopo ordinatus: In ordinis tamen defectu, cùm jam primò inſtaurari debet ordo, non poteſt tam accuratè obſervari, atque adeo extraordinarium aliquid tum poteſt intervenire ſine ullo vitio.* Theſe words you ſee are punctuall and plaine, that the power of ordaining Miniſters is originally in the Church; and that though when a Church hath Presbyters, the act of ordaining is to be done by thoſe Presbyters; yet in defect of ſuch it may be performed by them that are no Presbyters, lawfully, and without fault; which is the caſe of our Churches that are in their beginnings, and may be the caſe of any Church when they come to be without Officers, as by warre, peſtilence, &c. it may come to paſſe.

T. 22. There are ſome things common to Paſtors with Teachers; as, that they are both Officers of the Church appointed by Chriſt; both Elders or Biſhops to rule and feed the Church, by labouring in the Word and Doctrine, *Act.* 20 28. 1 *Tim.* 3. 1. *Tit.* 1. 5, 7. and therefore the name of Paſtour, in a generall ſenſe, may be given to them both, *Ier.*

3. 15.

3.15. as also the name of Teacher, *Isa.*30.20. as those names may also be given to Apostles, in as much as they also are Elders, Pastors, Teachers, to rule, to feed, to teach the Church of God, 1 *Pet.*5.1. *Ioh.*21.15.16. 1 *Tim.*2.7. & 2.1.11. And if Pastors and Teachers be both of them Church officers, to feed and rule the Church by labouring in the Word and Doctrine, they must not do this without application of it to the consciences and states of the hearers, as God shall helpe them: for this application is one part of his worke, that is by his office to preach the Word, without which the Word is not handled in such a manner as it ought to be, 2 *Tim.*2.15. 1 *Cor.*14.25. *Luk.*12.42. and many hearers need this, the Word delivered in generall without application of it being to them as bread set before children in the whole loafe. And if both of them must labour in the Word and Doctrine, and not onely in a generall way, but with application, we see not but they may both of them administer the Seales or Sacraments, wherein there is a speciall application of the promises of the Gospel, and the grace of Christ therein, unto the faithfull and believing receivers.

2. And yet for all this community between them, they are not in propriety of speech the same Officers, but distinct, and so the Scripture speaketh of them *Ephes.*4.11. For if a man would say their Offices are confounded, because the same generall worke of preaching the Word, and applying the same, belongs unto them both: By the same reason a man might say the offices of Apostles and Evangelists were confounded; for both of them were to preach the Word, with application of the same by doctrine, and Seales; and also that the ordinary Pastors were the same office with them both, because hee also is to doe the same worke of preaching and applying: But an Apostle is to feed, and rule, and teach, by way of Doctrine and Application, as an Apostle; an Evangelist as an Evangelist, and an ordinary Pastor as an ordinary Pastor, and therein lyes the difference: and wee may adde, a Teacher as a Teacher; and therein is he distinguished both from the Pastor, and from all other Church Officers, even as by the same they all are distinguished one from another, the same generall worke

of Doctrine and Application being common to them all.

3. And for the Teacher and Pastor, the difference between them lyes in this, that the one is principally to attend upon points of Knowledge and Doctrine, though not without Application; and the other to points of Practice, though not without Doctrine: and therefore the one of them is called *He that teacheth*, and his worke is thus expressed, *let him attend on teaching*; and the other, *He that exhorteth*, and his worke, *to attend on exhortation*, *Rom.* 12.7,8. and the gift of the one is called *a word of knowledge*, and the gift of the other, *a word of wisedome*, 1 *Cor.* 12.8. as experience also sheweth, that one mans gift is more doctrinall, and for points of knowledge; and anothers more exhortatory, and for points of practise.

To 23. It is not the manner of Elders among us, whether Ruling onely, or Ruling and Teaching also, to strive for authority or preheminence one above another; as remembring what lesson our Saviour taught his Disciples, when they were at strife among them, which of them should be the greatest, *Luk.* 22.24,25. *&c.* If *Diotrephes* strive for preheminence 3 *Joh.* 9,10. verily we abhorre such striving, and by the grace of God respect one another as Brethren. As for the peoples duty toward their Elders, it is taught them plainly in that place, 1 *Thes.* 5.12,13. as also in that of 1 *Tim.* 5.17 *Let the Elders that rule well bee counted worthy of double honour, specially they that labour in the Word and Doctrine*; and this Word (*specially*) shewes them, that as they are to account all their *Elders worthy of double honour*, so in speciall manner their Teaching or Preaching Elders.

To 24. & 25. These are answered in that which was sent the last yeare.

To 26. We doe believe that every Minister of the Gospel ought to be maintained with sufficient and honourable maintenance, according to his need and occasions, in regard of his person, calling, charge of children and hospitality, so as he that preacheth the Gospel may in all these respects live of

of the Gospel, 1 *Cor.* 9.14. *Gal* 6.6. 1 *Tim.* 5.17. And this maintenance is not to be allowed as almes and courtesie, but as debt and duty, to bee paid according to the rule of Justice; the Labourer is worthy of his wages, *Luk.* 10.17. which the Apostle sheweth to be according to all Lawes of nature, nations, *Moses* and Christ, 1 *Cor.* 9. But for setled and stinted maintenance, there is nothing done that way amongst us, except from yeare to yeare, because the conditions of Ministers may vary, and of the Church to which they doe belong; Neither doe we know any such thing to be appointed by Christ our Lord, for the maintenance of the Ministery in these dayes; but this we know, that the great mountaine burning with fire, cast into the sea upon the sounding of the second Trumpet *Rev.* 8.8,9. is applyed by some good Writers to those times, when *Constantine* brought setled endowments into the Church, with *ampla prædia* (as they are called) are counted by some to bee no better then poyson to the Church; as the Stories say that upon the fact of the good Emperour a voice was heard, which said, *Hodie seminatum est virus in Ecclesiam.* And if those Writers be not deceived which so expound that Scripture (as for our parts wee know not but they expound it truely) then in as much as upon the casting of that mountaine into the sea, a third part of it became blood, and a third part of living creatures dyed, and a third part of ships were destroyed, it may be truely gathered thence that the bringing in of setled endowments and eminent preferments into the Church, hath been the corruption, and to some the destruction of such as lived by them, both Church-officers and Church-members.

We doe not permit, and call upon (such whom you call) meere Lay men, and private persons, neither being in the Ministery nor intended to it, ordinarily to preach or prophecy publiquely, in or before the Congregation, if by ordinarily, you meane frequently and usually. For where ordinary Officers are not wanting to a Church, and neither detained from their worke by sickness, nor just absence, we thinke it most meet to offer our Sacrifice to God and to the *To* 27.

Church of our best gifts. But yet if you oppose ordinary to extraordinary, we doe confesse that some private members(to wit such as are eminently fitted with knowledge and utterance, being also men of humble spirits, and holy lives, all which qualifications we finde but in a few) may without an extraordinary calling from God be called forth by by the Church upon some occasion (and namely in the absence or bodily weakenesse of Ministers, or for tryall of gifts when a man intends the Ministery) to speake to edification, exhortation and comfort. *Iehosaphat* sent Princes (who neither were Ministers,nor intended so to be)to teach with the Priests and Levites, to wit, at least to incourage the people, to hearken to the Priests and Levites come amongst them, 2 *Chron.* 17. 7,8,9. As *Iehosaphat* himselfe also did the like, 2 *Chron.*20.20. Yea,and was their mouth also to God in prayer,*v.*2.5. to 13. As for that prophecying 1 *Cor.* 14.We conceive as some things in it be extraordinary, so some things ordinary. Extraordinary,that private men,and new converts should be so soon & so suddainly, & so much enlightened & enlarged,as to be able to prophecy publikely tothe edification of a whole Church:But yet this we conceive to be ordinary, that some private men may be found (at least in some Churches) grown Christians, of able gifts, who may have received a gift of Prophecy,and for such we doe not thinke it requireth any more an extraordinary calling for them to prophecy in our Churches,then for *Iehosaphat* and his Princes to prophecy in the Church of *Israel.*

To 28. Our Answer to this Question is that we never knew any Ministers that did call upon the people thus to doe: and as for us, such calling upon them is farre from us. All that we know to be holden in this case is this, that some thinke the people have a liberty to aske a Question publiquely for their better satisfaction upon very urgent and weighty cause, though even this is doubted of by others, and all judge the ordinary practice of it, not necessary: but (if it be not meekly and wisely carried) to be inconvenient if not utterly unlawfull, and therefore such asking of Questions is seldome used in ary Church among us and in most Churches never. True it is, in the times a little afore the Synod divers that were infected with corrupt opinions were

were very bold, & forward in this kind of asking Queſtions, after *Sermons*, eſpecially when they had heard ſomthing delivered publiquely that did make againſt their Tenents; by which kind of asking Queſtions, they plainely diſcovered of what ſpirit they were, but for being called upon by us thus to doe, (as it ſeems to your Queſtion that you have been informed) the truth is, there was no ſuch matter. But now theſe men are long ſince, (the greateſt part of them) to an Iſland (called *Aquedneck*) departed from amongſt us, ſome of them being excommunicated or baniſhed, or both, & others departing voluntarily, or for feare of the like cenſure, by meanes of which departure of theſe troubleſome ſpirits from amongſt us, and the bleſsing of God upon the Synod & Sermons that have laid open & reproved this diſorderly asking of Queſtions, a man may now live from one end of the year unto another in theſe Congregations, & not hear any man open his mouth in ſuch kind of asking Queſtions.

1. The converſion of ſinners unto God doth not alwaies follow the preaching of every one, that is in a lawfull office of miniſtery, as experience and Scripture doe aboundantly witneſſe, *Iſay.* 49. 4, 5. & 53. 1. *Ezech.* 3. 7. 2 *King.* 17. 13 14. *Mat.* 11. 20, 21. &c. *Iohn* 12. 37. *To* 29.

2. And when it doth follow, it is not by vertue of him, or of his office, but by vertue of Gods bleſsing, and the mighty operation of his ſpirit as he pleaſeth, without which the Miniſter and his office could have had no vertue at all to convert ſinners unto God, 1 *Cor.* 3. 6. no more then *Peter* and *Iohn* could heale the lame man, by virtue of any power or holineſſe that was in them, *Act.* 3. 12. For otherwiſe faithfull Miniſters ſhould not have their labours bleſſed for converſion ſome more and ſome leſſe, but all in the ſame meaſure, inaſmuch as one of them is no more a Miniſter then another, nor no more in Office then another, their office being the ſame, the effect in converſion would bee the ſame if converſion were by the vertue of their office. The truth it is, the Law of the Lord, (the whole Word of God) that converts the ſoule, *Pſal.* 19. 7. And the Goſpell that is the power of God unto Salvation. *Rom.* 1. 16. And therefore the converſion of a man to God is to be aſcribed to God, and to the Word of his Grace, and not to the Miniſter, nor any vertue of his office.

3. But

3. But this we doe acknowledge, that the ſound converſion of ſinners, whenſoever ſuch a thing comes to paſſe, doth argue that the Inſtruments of ſuch converſion are ſent of God: God would not ſo have bleſſed them, as to convert any by them, if himſelfe had not ſent them at all, *Rom.* 10. 14. 15. *Ier.* 23. 32.

4. And yet we dare not ſay, that Gods Word is not made effectuall to converſion, unleſſe the man that ſpeakes it be a Miniſter, that is to ſay, a Church Officer, for the contrary is evident from the Scripture, *John* 4. 39. *Act.* 8. 4. with 11. 19, 20, 21. 1 *Cor.* 7. 16. They that were ſcattered abroad upon the perſecution that aroſe about *Steven*, were not Church Officers, at leaſt all of them (for the Apoſtles who were their chiefe, if not their only preaching Officers, were not ſcattered abroad upon that perſecution, but remained ſtill at *Jeruſalem*, Acts 8. 1.) and yet theſe men did ſo preach the Word of the Lord Jeſus to the *Iewes* and the *Grecians*, that through the good hand of the Lord that was with them, a great number believed and turned to the Lord; And the ſame we ſay of the woman of *Samaria*, by whoſe Teſtimonie of Chriſt many of the *Samaritans* believed on him. To reſtraine the efficacy of Gods Word in ſuch ſort as to ſay that none can be converted by it, unleſſe he that ſpeakes it be a Miniſter, is to limit the ſpirit of the Lord, where he hath not limited himſelf, who is free in working by whom he pleaſeth, and as he will, 1 *Cor.* 12. 11. Even as the wind bloweth where it liſteth, *Iohn* 3. 8. and ſometimes doth bring to paſſe great things by weake meanes, that his owne glory may be the more, 1 *Cor.* 1. 27, 28, 29. If any ſay, how can theſe things ſtand together, that a man that is no Miniſter may be an Inſtrument of converſion, and yet converſion of ſinners argues that the man is ſent of God? Wee anſwer, that we muſt diſtinguiſh of ſending according to the divers degrees thereof. For ſometimes it imports no more but ſuch an Act of Gods diſpoſing providence, whereby men are gifted and enabled for ſuch or ſuch a worke, and permitted thereunto, though they have no command from him for the doing thereof, nor doe it not with a ſincere minde in any obedience to God, but for corrupt and ſiniſter

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ends of their owne. Thus God ſent the King of *Aſſyria* againſt the *Iewes*, Iſa. 10. 6. And bands of the *Caldees*, and bands of other Nations againſt *Jehojakim*, and againſt *Iudah*, to deſtroy it, 2 *King*. 24. 2. And yet they had no command from him to doe this, but ſinned grievouſly in ſo doing. Thus they that preached Chriſt not ſincerely, but of envie and ſtrife, to adde affliction to *Pauls* bands, yet inaſmuch as they preached Chriſt, might be ſaid to be ſent of God, and therefore the Apoſtle joyed at their preaching, *Phil.* 1. 15, 16. Thus *Baalam* in his Prophecies againſt the enemies of *Iſrael* and for the happy ſtate of Gods people, might be ſaid to be ſent of God, though his heart and ends were corrupt and ſinfull. But if men be not onely enabled with gifts for ſuch or ſuch a worke, but beſides this, have a ſincere minde and deſire in the uſing thereof, to ſeeke the glory of God, and the good of ſoules, ſuch men may much more be ſaid to be ſent of God, *Iohn* 7. 18. For theſe men have not onely abilities and gifts from God, and permiſsion to imploy them as the former had, but alſo his ſpirit within them, which doth ſet their hearts on right and holy ends, which the other wanted. And yet if men doe want a lawfull office of Miniſtery, wherein to exerciſe thoſe gifts or a lawfull calling to that office or exerciſe, they may in that reſpect be ſaid not to be ſent of God, or not to be called of him though ſent of him, in the firſt or ſecond reſpect. Thus in the Scriptures it is ſaid of ſome they ran and I ſent them not, *Ier.* 23. 21. I perceived that God had not ſent him, but he pronounced his Prophecies, becauſe *Sanballat* and *Tobiah* had hired him, *Neh.* 6. 12. And yet doubtleſſe in reſpect of Gods diſpoſing providence, he had ſent them, as the Scripture witneſſeth, that God ſends ſtrong deluſions and lying Prophets, and unfaithfull Shepherds, 2 *Theſ.* 2. 11. 1 *King.* 22. 22, 23. *Zech.* 11. 16. to be a plague unto the Sons of men, and for tryall to his ſervants, *Deut.* 13. 3. 1 *Cor.* 11. 19. Now let theſe diſtinctions be applyed to the caſe in hand, and we may perceive how, if a man convert ſinners, certainly God ſends him; and yet ſome that are not called to any office in the Miniſtery, may through his bleſsing convert ſinners: A man converts none unleſſe God ſend him in the firſt or ſecond ſence and yet he may convert, and not bee ſent, if ſending be taken in the third ſence, that is for a lawfull calling into ſome office in the

Church. And wee may adde, further a man may be sent in this third sence, and yet convert none if he be not also sent in the first and second respect; that is a man may have a lawfull calling outwardly unto a lawfull office in the Church, and yet not convert sinners, if he want gifts or sincerity of heart, which might be the case of *Judas*, and of many wicked Priests in the old Testament: Yea, happily convert none though he be truly sent in all three respects, as was said before in the beginning of the Answer to this Quære. But if comparison be made, we doubt not, but whilest the Ministery remaines uncorrupt, God is wont to follow with a greater blessing, the labours of those who have gifts and an office of Ministery also, then of those who have gifts alone without office. He is willing, and wonted to honour himselfe most, where most of his wayes are observed.

To 30. Master *Parker Polit. Eccles. l.* 2. *c.* 39. & *c.* 41. observes a difference between the Substantialls in Church Politie, and the accessaries or accidentalls, and circumstantialls: And againe, that of circumstances some are generall, and some particular and individuall; and so sheweth that the Church Politie in regard of the substantialls thereof is prescribed in the Word, and therefore immutable. According to which distinction wee Answer, that if those words (precisely the same course) mentioned in this Question, be not meant of particular and individuall circumstances, but only of the substantialls or generall circumstances, then for ought we know there is no materiall point, either in constitution, or government, wherein the Churches in *N. E.* (*viz.* In the bay, in the jurisdiction of *Plymouth*, at *Connecticute*, and *Quilipiake*) do not observe the same course. (And sure it is, if they doe not they ought, because Christ hath left but one way for all Churches, and the same to be observed to the Worlds end, 1 *Tim.* 6. 13,14.) Onely, that conformity to the Lyturgie and Ceremonies in some places, to the Northward, that Anabaptisme at *Providence*, and Familisme at *Aquidneck*, hinders that we cannot say the same of them, nor of any other in *N. E.* that concurre with them in their unwarrantable wayes, if there be any such, though thankes be to God there is none within this Jurisdiction.

To 31. Who must have liberty to sit downe in this Common-wealth and enioy the liberties thereof is not our place to determine, but the

the Magistrates who are the rulers and governours of the Common-wealth, and of all persons within the same. And as for acknowledging a company to be a sister Church, that shall set up, and practise another forme of Church Discipline, being otherwise in some measure, as you say, approveable, we conceive the companie that shall so doe, shall not be approveable therein. For the Discipline appointed by Jesus Christ for his Churches is not arbitrary, that one Church may set up and practice one forme, and another another forme, as each one shall please, but is one and the same for all Churches, and in all the Essentialls and Substantialls of it unchangable, and to be kept, till the appearing of Jesus Christ, 1 *Tim.* 6. 13,14. from which place Master *Cartwright* observes the perpetuity of Church Government taught by the Apostles, unto the end of the World, and is plain and large in this point, 1 *Rep.* p. 177. as is likewise Mr. *Parker Polit. Eccles. l.* 2. *c.* 42. and so forward to the end of that Book, unto whom we refer you herein. And if that Discipline which we here practise, be (as we are perswaded of it) the same which Christ hath appointed, and therefore unalterable, we see not how another can be lawfull; and therefore if a company of people shall come hither, and here set up and practise another, we pray you thinke not much, if we cannot promise to approve of them in so doing, especially untill wee see how approvable the men may be, and what Discipline it is that they would set up. For should wee in such generall words as is there expressed, promise to accept of a companie as a Sister Church, that shall set up and practise another Discipline, and then should be taken at the utmost extent of our words, we might by this meanes be bound to accept of a company of Papists, or Arminians, or Familists, or Anabaptists, as a sister Church, for there is none of these but something may be found in them, and in their Discipline, that is in some measure approveable. And yet we pray you heartily in the Lord, so conceive of us in this passage, that we are farre from making any such comparison, as if your selves were not approved in our consciences far above the best of such men, yea and above our selves in many respects.

We have said before in that which we sent you the last yeare, and upon this occasion we say it now againe, that you are in our hearts (if the Lord would suffer) to live and dye together: and

therefore if this Question were meant of your ſelves, or any of you, and a company of godly people joyning with you (as it may be it is, though we cannot certainly ſay it, becauſe you doe not expreſſe ſo much) we thinke if you were here, wee ſhould gladly accept of you and your people as a ſiſter-Church, and that you would doe the like to ours; and yet not when you ſhould ſet up and practiſe one forme of Church-diſcipline, and we another; but becauſe we are perſwaded if you were here, you would ſet up and practiſe the very ſame that wee doe, and not any other: or elſe if we be ſwerving from the rule in any particular (as God knowes we are but weake men, and far from dreaming of perfection in this life) God would by you ſend in more light unto us then yet we ſee, and make you inſtruments in his hand for perfecting what is here begun according to his will, for ſtrengthening what is weake, and reforming what may be found to be amiſſe: For we truſt in the Lord, that as wee are deſirous that you might joyne with us in the wayes wherein we now walke, (which we doe not ſee but they are according to the Rule) ſo we ſhould be as willing to receive light from you, and to redreſſe (as God ſhall helpe us) whatſoever by you or any other he may diſcover to us to ſtand in need of Reformation. For which cauſe among others we doe the more earneſtly deſire, if it were the Lords will that he might ſend you hither, nothing doubting but if you were here, there would be ſuch agreement between you and us, that either you would approve of the things which we beleeve and practiſe, or that we ſhould approve of what you may ſhew us to be more agreeable to the minde of Chriſt: and then there would be no occaſion of ſuch a Queſtion, *Whether we may ſet up and practiſe another diſcipline, and yet be accepted as a ſiſter-Church*: but rather of bleſſing the Lord, when that ſhall be accompliſhed in you and us which is written in the Prophets, *I will give them one heart and one way: I will turne unto the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the Name of the Lord, to ſerve him with one conſent*, Jer. 32. 39. Zeph. 3. 9. *Wee have confidence in you through the Lord, that you will be none otherwiſe minded*; but if in any thing ye be *otherwiſe minded, God ſhall reveale even this unto you*, Gal. 5. 10. Phil. 3. 15.

To 32. This was anſwered in the anſwer to Poſit. 1. & 2. ſent unto you the laſt yeare.

FINIS.

AN APOLOGIE OF THE CHVRCHES IN *NEW-ENGLAND* FOR *CHVRCH-COVENANT.*

OR,

A Diſcourſe touching the Covenant between God and men, and eſpecially concerning *Church-Covenant*, that is to ſay, The Covenant which a Company doe enter into when they become a Church; and which a *particular perſon enters into when he becomes a member of a Church.*

Sent over in Anſwer to Maſter BERNARD in the Yeare 1639.

And now publiſhed for the ſatisfaction of all who deſire reſolution in this point.

This is a mistake. It was another discourse that was sent to mr Bernard.

LONDON,
Printed by *T. P.* and *M. S.* for *Benjamin Allen.*
1643.

AN

APOLOGIE

A DISCOVRSE TOVCHING THE *Covenant* between *God* and *Men*, and especially concerning *Church-Covenant*, that is to say, the *Covenant* which a Company do enter into when they become a Church, and *which a particular person enters into when he becomes a member of a Church*. 1639.

JER. 50. 5.

Come let us joyne our selves to the Lord, in a perpetuall Covenant that shall not be forgotten.

ALthough that which is foretold in these two Chapters, and namely in the fourth and fifth verses of this Chapter, was in part fulfilled when the people of God returned from Captivitie in *Babylon* at the end of seventie yeares: yet we must not limit the place to that time onely, but may extend it further to the dayes of the Gospel, and the spirituall return, not of the Jews onely, but of the Gentiles also, when men shall be converted from Pagan, Antichristian, Babylonish, or Jewish bondage and captivitie, or from slavery to sinne, and self-righteousnesse, and shall be joyned to God in the fellowship of his Church, in the dayes of the New Testament. For as some passages in this Scripture were never fully accomplished at the returne from the captivitie of the seventie yeares, and namely this, that the children of *Israel* and *Judah* should returne both together: (for the ten tribes returned not

at all:) ſo many things that literally concerned the Jewes were types and figures, ſignifying the like things concerning the people of God in theſe latter dayes: In which reſpect ſincere converts are called Jewes, *Rom.* 2. 29. and Iſraelites, *Gal.* 6. 16. *Joh.* 1. 47. and our Sacraments are made Antitypes of theirs, 1 *Cor.* 10. 1, 2, 3. and Rome is called Babylon, *Rev.* 17. 5. and Papiſts are called Gentiles, *Rev.* 11. 2. and therefore the captivitie of Babylon might well be a Type of the ſpirituall captivitie of Gods people to Antichriſtian bondage, and their returne from Babylon to Sion, a type of the returne of Chriſtians from Romiſh ſlavery to the true Sion, the Chriſtian Church. And this may be added further, that this place ſeemes not onely to be meant of the private or perſonall converſion of this or that particular Chriſtian, but alſo further, of the open and joynt calling of a company, becauſe it is ſaid, they ſhall come, the children of *Iſrael* and the children of *Judah* together, and that their ſaying ſhall not be, *Let me joyne*, &c. but in the Plurall number, *Let us joyne our ſelves unto the Lord*, ſo noting the joyning of a company together in holy Covenant with God.

Concerning which Covenant with God, it will not be amiſſe for the better underſtanding of that which followes; firſt, briefly to ſhew how diverſly Covenant is taken in the Scripture, which ſometimes imports generally any firme appointment or promiſe of God, when man doth not promiſe unto God any thing backe againe: Thus the preſerving of *Noah* in the Arke, and of the world from being drowned any more by a floud; the unchangeable ſucceſſion of day and night; the giving of the Prieſthood unto *Phineas*; the ſetting forth of the Shew-bread every Sabbath before the Lord, and the giving of the heave-offering unto the Prieſts, are ſaid to be done by a Covenant, or an everlaſting Covenant of God, *Gen.* 6. 18. & 9. 9, 10, 11. *Jer.* 33. 20. *Num.* 25. 12, 13. *Levit.* 24. 8. *Num.* 18. 19. But ſometimes Covenant is taken more ſtrictly and properly, for an agreement which God doth make with men, when he promiſeth ſome bleſſing unto men, and bindes them to performe ſome dutie backe againe to him. Taken thus it hath two parts: firſt, a promiſe or ſtipulation of ſome bleſſing on Gods part: ſecondly, Reſtipulation or promiſe, or binding of man unto dutie back againe on his part: both theſe are in thoſe words of the Covenant, *I will be to thee a God, thou ſhalt be to me a people*; and ſo *Gen.* 17. 1. & *v.* 7, 8, 9, 10. The Covenant

venant taken thus is either the Covenant of workes, or the Covenant of grace: And againe the Covenant may be considered, first as it is personall, private and particular, between God and one particular soule, making Covenant with God, and God with him, either at his first conversion, or at other times; of which we reade 2 *Sam.* 23 5. & *Psal.* 119. 106. & 66. 13, 14. & 27 8. & *Psal.* 119. 7, 8 Secondly, it is generall and publick of a company joyntly together, of which this Text *Jer.* 50. 5. seemes most properly to speake: as also that *Deut.* 29. 9, 10, &c. and that *Exod.* 19. 5, 6, and many others: A Covenant taken thus generally when it respects spirituall blessings, and spirituall duties, in the Communion of Saints, is that which is called Church-covenant, which Church-Covenant differs not in substance of the things promised from that which is between the Lord and every particular soule, but onely in some other respects; as first, the one is of one Christian in particular, the other of a company joyntly together. Secondly, if right Order be observed, a man ought not to enter into Church-Covenant, till he be in Covenant with God before, in respect of his personall estate. Thirdly, The one is usually done in private, as in a mans Closet between the Lord and his soule, and the other in some publick assembly. Fourthly, The one in these dayes is of such duties as the Gospel requires of every Christian as a Christian, the other of such duties as the Gospel requires of every Church and the members thereof.

Now concerning Church-Covenant, two things are to be noted for the better understanding thereof: first, the description of it: secondly, the use of it, and the benefit and fruit thereof. For the former it may be thus described, *viz. A solemne and publick promise before the Lord, whereby a company of Christians, called by the power and mercy of God to fellowship with Christ, and by his providence to live together, and by his grace to cleave together in the unitie of faith, and brotherly love, and desirous to partake together in all the holy Ordinances of God, doe in confidence of his gracious acceptance in Christ, binde themselves to the Lord, and one to another, to walke together by the assistance of his Spirit, in all such wayes of holy worship in him, and of edification one towards another, as the Gospel of Christ requireth of every Christian Church, and the members thereof.*

In this description there are comprised six things: First, the generall name of the thing: [*A solemne and publick promise*] a promise

miſe it is, and therefore it is called, a joyning in Covenant here: an entring into Covenant, *Deut.* 29. 10. Solemne and publick, and therefore it is by the children of *Iſrael* and the children of *Iudah* together: and they ſay, *let us joyne*. Secondly, The object [*the Lord, and one another*] *joyne our ſelves to the Lord*, it is not a promiſe onely to man, but to the Lord himſelfe, and likewiſe to one another; for, *come let us joyne*, implyes mutuall conſent together. Thirdly, The Agents or the qualification of the perſons: [*Chriſtians*] not Turkes, Indians, &c. Saints, *Pſal.* 50. 5. 16, 17. [*called to fellowſhip with Chriſt*] ſo 1 *Cor.* 1. 9. elſe if they be not united to Chriſt by faith, they are not fit materialls for ſuch a building as a Church of God, which is the houſe of the living God, *Epheſ.* 1. 1. 1 *Cor.* 1. 2. *Phil.* 1. 1. *Rev.* 21. 27. [*By his providence to live together*] elſe they cannot partake in the Lords Ordinances together as Churches ought to doe, 1 *Cor.* 14. 23. *Act.* 14. 27. the whole Church comes together in one place [*cleaving together in faith and love*] ſo *Act.* 4. 32. If they differ, namely, in opinion, or in their affection, and ſhould joyne in this Covenant, breaches, factions, rents, and ſchiſmes, would be like to be the iſſue of ſuch joyning: things ſo unlike would not cloſe nor long hold together, *Dan.* 2. 43. [*Deſirous to partake in all Ordinances*] this ſhould be the ground of their joyning in Covenant together, *Pſal.* 110. 3. willing: and not pride, nor gaine, nor the like: Fourthly, The Act [*binde themſelves*] that now they are bound by their owne word and promiſe; that they may ſay now, as *Pſal.* 56. 12. *Thy vowes are upon me*, or as *Num.* 30. 2. if he binde his ſoule with a vow. Fiftly, The matter promiſed; [*To walke together in all ſuch wayes of worſhip and mutuall edification, as the Goſpel requireth of Churches and Church-members*] they binde not themſelves to obſerve any deviſes of their owne, nor inventions of men, but ſuch things as the word of God requireth; neither is it perfect obedience to the Law, for that were impoſſible to performe, and preſumption to promiſe; nor is it onely in generall the duties of the Goſpel, but ſpecially ſuch duties of worſhip to God, & edification of one another as concerne Church-State, which now they enter into. Sixtly, The manner of performing [*Confidence of Gods gracious acceptance and aſſiſtance through Chriſt*] for in all our wayes God muſt be acknowledged, *Pro.* 3. 6. and much more in ſuch ſpeciall matters of weight: If men in entring into this Covenant looke for acceptance through any worth

of

of their owne, or promise dutie in their own strength, they shew themselves like to the Pharisees, *Luk.* 18. 10, 11, and turne the Church-Covenant into a Covenant of workes: and as many as are of the workes of the Law, are under the curse, *Gal.* 3. 10.

The use and benefit of this Church-Covenant, and the fruit thereof, may be seene in two particulars; first, That this is that whereby a company of Christians doe become a Church: It is the Constituting forme of a Church. Secondly, This is that by taking hold whereof a particular person becomes a member of a Church, which was constituted afore. For the former of these; every Christian Church must have in it both matter and forme, and as the matter by Gods appointment are visible Saints, or visible beleevers, *Ephes.* 1. 1. 1 *Cor.* 1. 2. and in the New Testament, onely so many as may meete together in one Congregation: So the forme is a uniting, or combining, or knitting of those Saints together into one visible body, by the band of this holy Covenant. Some union or band there must be amongst them, whereby they come to stand in a new relation to God, and one towards another, other then they were in before: or els they are not yet a Church, though they be fit materialls for a Church; even as soule and body are not a man, unlesse they be united; nor stones and timber an house, till they be compacted and conjoyned.

Now that a company becomes a Church, by joyning in Covenant, may be made good sundry wayes; first, By plaine Texts of Scripture; as from *Deut.* 29. 1, 10, 11, 12, 13. *Ye stand this day all you before the Lord your God, your Captaines of your Tribes, your Elders, your Officers, with all the men of Israel,* ver. 10. *That thou shouldest enter into Covenant with the Lord thy God,* ver. 12. *and he may establish thee for a people unto himselfe,* ver. 13. So that here is plainly shewed, that here was a company, *ver.* 10. and this company were to be established to be a people unto the Lord, that is to say, a Church, *ver.* 13. And this is done by the peoples entring into solemne Covenant with God, *ver.* 12. And therefore a company of people doe become a Church by entring into Covenant with God.

"*This Covenant was not like our Church-Covenants, for it was of all* *Object.* 1
"*the Nation together; whereas the Church-Covenant with us, is of some*
"*select persons, leaving out others.*

1. This Objection concerns the matter of a Church, but the *Answer.* Covenant is not the materiall cause of a Church, but the formall

cause thereof: and for this the Text is plaine and expresse, that by entring into Covenant with God, a people come to be the Lords people, that is to say, his Church.

2. If it was of all the people together, the reason was because that Church was a nationall Church: now if a nationall Church becomes a Church by entring into solemne Covenant with God, then a Congregationall Church becomes a Church by the same means; for there is no difference between them in this point.

3. Though it was of all the people, we may not say it proves that when we looke at the materiall cause of a Church, there may be a promiscuous taking in of all Commers without distinction or separation of the precious from the vile; for, first, when God took in this Nation to be his people, he separated them from all the Nations of the earth besides: so that there was a distinction and separation of some from others. Secondly, this generation was generally a generation of beleevers; for it was they that were to enter into the land within a while after; for they were fortie yeares in the Wildernesse, & this Covenant was made in the last moneth save one of the last of those fortie yeares, *Deut.* 1. 3. And their carkasses fell not in the Wildernesse through unbelief, as their Fathers did, *Num* 14. *Heb* 3. but entred by faith, and when they were entred, subdued Kingdomes by their faith, *Heb.* 11. 33. and served the Lord all the dayes of *Joshua*, and of the Elders that outlived *Joshua*, Josh. 24. 31. As for that which is said of them, *ver.* 4, 5. of this Chap. that the Lord had not given them eyes to see, &c. that proves not that they were wholly hardned in a carnall estate, but onely that they were dull and slow of heart to consider of sundry dispensations of God towards them; for as much is said of the disciples of Christ, *Mar.* 8. 17, 18. when doubtlesse they were not meere carnall or naturall persons.

Object. 2 "*This people* Deut. 29. *could not become the Lords people by entring* "*into solemne Covenant with God, for they were the Lords Church and people already before this.*

Answer. 1. If they were, yet that was by entring into solemne Covenant with God on Mount *Sinai*, when the Lord had brought them up out of the Land of *Egypt*; for then they entred into solemne Covenant with God, and God with them, and so they became the Lords peculiar people, *Exod.* 19. 4, 5, 6, 8. &c. If they were his people before that, yet that also was by Covenant made with them in the

the loynes of *Abraham*, when God spoke him and his seede to be his Church and people, yet separating *Ishmael* from *Isaac* and *Esau* from *Jacob*, that the inheritance of the Covenant of God, and of being the Church of God, might rest in the house of *Jacob*.

2. Yet it was not without great reason that the Lord should now establish them by solemne Covenant to be a people to himselfe, because the Nation had been much degenerated from the spirit and wayes of *Abraham* in *Egypt*, and had broken that Covenant by their Idolatries there, *Ezek.* 20. 7. 8. And the Covenant made in *Sinai* or *Horeb* when they were come out of *Egypt*, they had also broken by their Idolatries in the Wildernesse, *Ezek.* 20. 13, 16. for which causes, and the like, the Lord consumed that generation, that they never entred into the Land, *Josh.* 5. 4, 6. And therefore now when their posteritie and children were ready to enter in, the Lord entred into Covenant with them, and thereby established them to be his people, their Fathers being cut off for breaking the Covenant. But still it was by Covenant that both Fathers first, and children afterward became a Church and people unto God; and when this generation were entred into the Land, their Covenant made before between God and them, was confirmed by Circumcision, *Josh.* 5. 2. 7. they being not Circumcised before.

"*But this Covenant was of the whole Church with God, and therefore* Object. 3.
"*not like our Church-Covenants, which are between the Church and the*
"*members, concerning watchfulnesse over one another, and the like.*

Our Church-Covenants are with the Lord himselfe, as was shewed before in the description thereof. For watchfulnesse and duties of edification one towards another, are but branches of the Lords Covenant, being duties commanded by the Law: and so it was with that people of *Israel*, who when they promised and Covenanted to walke in all the wayes of God; in all his statutes and commandements and judgements, they promised these duties of love and watchfulnesse and edification one towards another, because these were duties commanded and required of God, *Lev.* 19. 17. *Deut.* 29. 18. the neglect whereof in the matter of *Achan* was the sinne of all the Congregation, and brought judgement upon them all, *Josh.* 7. 11, 12. Yea by this Covenant they were bound to duties towards them that were not then present, but children afterward to be borne, and proselytes, that afterward should be added Answer.

ded to them, *ver.* 14, 15. Like as our Church-Covenants are with them that now are, and that hereafter shall become members of the same Church. When *Jehojada* made a Covenant between the King and the people, 2 *King.* 11. 17. that Covenant was but a branch of the Lords Covenant with them all, both King and people: for the King promised but to Rule the people righteously, according to the will of God: and the people to be subject to the King so Ruling. Now these duties of the King to them, and of them to the King, were such as God required in his Covenant, both of him and them: and so it is in Church-Covenant, the duties of the Church to the members, and the members to the Church, and one another, are no other but such as the Gospel and the Covenant of grace requireth both of the Church and the members of it in their severall places.

Object. 4 "*But this place of* Deut. 29. *is not sufficient to prove a Church-Covenant in these dayes: because it is in the Scriptures of the old Testament, for whatsoever must be used in the dayes of the New Testament, must be proved from the Scriptures of the New Testament, or else it is to be layd aside.*

Answer. 1. The Church-Covenant may be proved from the New Testament also, as will afterwards appeare.

2. But suppose there were not pregnant places for it in the New Testament, yet it is not enough to prove the same unlawfull: for whatsoever Ordinance of the old Testament is not repealed in the New Testament, as peculiar to the Jewish Pædagogie, but was of morall and perpetuall equitie, the same bindes us in these dayes, and is to be accounted the revealed will of God in all ages, though it be not particularly and expressely mentioned in the writings of the New Testament, else how shall we prove it unlawfull for a man to marry his Sister, or his Aunt? How shall we prove it warrantable and necessary for Magistrates to punish Sabbath-breaking, blasphemy, and Idolatry? How shall we prove it lawfull to apply the seale of Gods Covenant unto Infants? or to admit women to eate of the holy things; for the Scriptures of the New Testament doe speake little in these cases; onely the Scriptures of the Old Testament doe give direction, and light about them, *Lev.* 18. & 19. *Neh.* 13. 15. &c. 2 *Chron.* 15. 16. & 2 *King.* 23. *Gen.* 17. 2. & *Exod.* 12. 4. 6. And the New Testament hath nothing to the contrary, and they are all according to morall equitie and reason,

and

and therefore they are to be obſerved from the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament, as the revealed will of God, though there were nothing expreſſely for them in the New. And the ſame we ſay of the particular in hand. For, that a company ſhould be combined together into one body, in way of Government and ſubjection, by way of mutuall free Covenant; as men doe when they enter into Church Eſtate, nothing is more naturall or agreeable to morall equitie; nay, it implyeth a contradiction in the very name of libertie or freedome, that free-men ſhould take upon them authoritie or power over free-men without their free conſent, and voluntary and mutuall Covenant or Engagement. And therefore ſeeing this Covenant is not repealed in the Scriptures of the New Teſtament, the Scriptures of the Old are ſufficient warrant for it.

Another Scripture to prove the ſame, is *Deut.* 26. 16, 17, 18. with *Deut.* 27. 9. *This day the Lord hath commanded thee to doe theſe Statutes and Judgements, thou ſhalt therefore keepe and doe them, &c. Thou haſt avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walke in his wayes, and to keepe his Statutes, &c. And the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people; Take heed and hearken, O Iſrael, this day thou art become the people of the Lord thy God.* This Scripture plainly ſhewes theſe things: 1. That here was the making of a Covenant between God and man; for that avouching of God to them, and them to God, was the making of Covenant, *ver.* 17, 18. 2. This was not of one perſon, but of a company together, the whole people of *Iſrael*, 26. 18. & 27. 9. 3 Here is the effect of this Covenant, that thereby they become the Lords people, *ver.* 9. So that when a company doe enter into holy Covenant with God, they become thereby the Lords people, that is to ſay, his Church. So *Ezech.* 16. 8. proves the ſame likewiſe: *I entred into Covenant with thee, ſaith the Lord, and thou becameſt mine.* Here alſo is the making of Covenant between the Lord and men; and this Covenant was not perſonall, but of a company; for it was with Hieruſalem, *ver.* 2. which was a whole Citie; it was with them that were multiplied as the bud of the feild, *ver.* 7; and it was with them that did proſper into a kingdome, *ver.* 13. and therefore not meant onely of any one particular perſon: And by this Covenant they became the Lords; that is, the Lords Church and people; for it is expreſly ſaid, *I entred into Covenant with thee, and thou becameſt mine.* So that when a company enter into Covenant with God, and God with

them, they become thereby the Lords Church and people. Likewiſe *Ezek.* 20. 37. *I will cauſe you to paſſe under the rod; and I will bring you into the bond of the Covenant.* In which place, there is firſt mention of an holy Covenant. Secondly, This was not of one perſon, but of a company, the whole houſe of Iſrael, *ver.* 30. 39. Thirdly, And this Covenant is called a *Bond*, becauſe it is by Covenant that a people are bound, and tyed, and knit together, as one Church, all of them unto the Lord, and one unto another; So that the Covenant is the bond of union, by which a company are ſo combined and united, as that they become a Church. It is alſo obſervable, how the Lord before he would bring them into this bond of the Covenant, he would *cauſe them to paſſe under the rod*; by which phraſe, as *Junius* upon the place well obſerves, is meant tryall and probation; drawne from the manner of Shepheards or owners of Cattell, who went among their ſheepe, or other cattell with a rod, and therewith pointed out ſuch as were for the Lords holy uſe, as *Lev.* 27. 32. And ſo hereby is noted that God would not in the dayes of the Goſpel have men to be brought into his Church hand over head, but he would firſt cauſe them to paſſe under the rod of due tryall and probation; and then ſuch as upon tryall were found to be holy for God, or meete matter for his Church, ſhould ſolemnly enter into Covenant with God, and that Covenant ſhould be the bond that ſhould combine them, and knit them together into one, that ſo they that were many particular perſons, ſhould all become one body, that is to ſay, a Church.

And ſo much of the firſt Argument drawne from plaine Texts of Scripture.

Argu. 2. A ſecond Argument may be taken from the Titles that are given to the Church; as firſt, that the Church is ſaid to be married or eſpouſed unto Chriſt, *Jer.* 2. 2. & 3. 14. 2 *Cor.* 11. 2. From whence the Argument may be formed thus: If every Church becomes a Church by being married or eſpouſed unto Chriſt, then a company becomes a Church by way of Covenant: But the former is true, therefore the latter is true alſo.

The Aſſumption, that a Church becomes a Church by being married unto Chriſt, is plaine from the former Scriptures, where the Church of *Iſrael*, and the Church of *Corinth*, in regard of their entring into Church-Eſtate, are ſaid to be eſpouſed and married unto Chriſt, as a loving and chaſt Virgine to one husband. Which

ſpirituall

ſpirituall marriage between Chriſt and his Church, is alſo taught in the type of the marriage between King *Salomon* and *Pharoahs* daughter, *Pſal.* 45.

The Conſequence of the Propoſition is plaine in reaſon; for there is no marriage but by way of Covenant; no woman becomes a mans wife, but by way of beſtowing her ſelfe in Covenant upon ſuch a man: neither doth a man become an husband, but by the ſame means; and therefore the Scripture ſpeaking of the violation of marriage, calls it a violation of Covenant, *Prov.* 2. 17.

" *Chriſt hath but one wife or Spouſe,* Cant. 6 9. *Object.* 1.

The Catholique Church indeed is but one; *viz.* the whole company of Gods Elect in heaven, in earth, dead, now living, and not yet borne: But as there is the Church-Catholique, which is but one; ſo there are particular and viſible Churches, which are in number many; and therefore the Scripture ſpeakes of Churches, 2 *Cor.* 8. 1. 19. *Gal.* 1. 2. Of the Churches of the Gentiles, *Rom.* 16. 4. Of ſeven Churches, *Rev.* 1. 4. Of all Churches, 1 *Cor.* 14 33. & 7. 17. *Rev.* 2. 23. *Anſwer.*

" *But if every particular Church be the wife of Chriſt, how many hun-* *Obj.* 2.
" *dred wives ſhould he have?*

1. If the Church of Iſrael, *Jer.* 2 2. the Church of *Corinth*, 2 *Cor.* 11. 2. The Jewiſh Church, *Rev.* 19. 7. be the Spouſe and wife of Chriſt, there is no reaſon but others ſhould be the ſame alſo, eſpecially ſeeing there is no particular Church, but in reſpect of their Church eſtate, they may decline and goe a whoring from Chriſt, and that ſhews that they were firſt eſpouſed to him; for no woman can be ſaid to goe a whoring from a man, if ſhee were never married, nor eſpouſed to him at all. *Anſw.*

2. This that ſeemes an abſurditie, and were a ſinfull practiſe among men, in reſpect of Chriſt, is a certaine truth, and no diſhonour unto him at all, to have more Spouſes then one upon earth, many ſpirituall Spouſes. Men cannot give themſelves wholly and intirely to many as Chriſt can. Every faithfull ſoule is eſpouſed and married unto Chriſt; and in that reſpect he hath not onely many hundred but many thouſand, yea many millions of ſpirituall Spouſes.

" *But this ſpirituall marriage is between Chriſt and the Church, But* *Obj.* 3.
" *the Church-Covenant is between the Church and the members, and*
" *therefore this marriage doth not prove the Church-Covenant.*

Answer. 1. In some sort there may be said to be a marriage between the Church and the members, *viz.* in respect of that deare love and affection, that ought to be between them; and therefore it is said, *As a young man marrieth a Virgine, so shall the children of the Church be married to the Church*, Isa. 62. 5.

2. But properly the marriage is between Christ & the Church, and so is the Covenant also, so farre as therein they give up themselves to Christ as unto an head and Lord; as a woman in the Covenant of marriage doth give up her selfe unto her husband; And the performance of such duties as the Church and the member owe one unto another, is a branch of that marriage-Covenant, wherein they are tyed to Christ; for Christ himselfe in his Covenant requires, not onely that they should give up themselves to him, but also that they should performe these duties one unto another. And accordingly it is said of the Churches in *Macedonia*, that *they gave up themselves first to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God*, 2 Cor. 8. 5. True it is, they doe also binde themselves by Covenant one unto another, but in that respect the Covenant is properly a brotherly Covenant; like that 1 *Sam.* 20. 8. *Amos* 1. 9. because there the engagement is to one another as brethren, fellow-members, and fellow-helpers, and not as to one head or Lord, as it is in respect of Christ, and therefore in that respect it is not so properly a marriage-Covenant as it is in respect of Christ: though duties to one another are promised in their Covenant with one another, and also in their Covenant with Christ. In briefe thus: They promise unto Christ duties to him, and duties to one another according to him: and so their Covenant is a marriage-Covenant with Christ: They promise also to one another, duties to one another, and so it is a brotherly Covenant.

Another Title given to the Church (which also proves that a Church is made by Covenant) is the Title of a Citie, or Citie of God, *Psal.* 87 3, & 48 1. 8. & 122. 3. *Ephes.* 2. 19. The Argument lyeth thus. If a true Church be a Citie of God, then a Church becomes a Church by Covenant: But every true Church is a Citie of God. *Ergo.*

The Assumption is proved by the Scriptures forealledged. The Consequence of the Proposition is plaine in reason, for every Citie is united by some Covenant among themselves, the Citizens are received into *jus Civitatis*, or right of Citie priviledges, by some Covenant

Covenant or Oath; And therefore it is ſo likewiſe in this Citie of God the Church; and men become Citizens of the Church by ſolemne Covenant.

The third Argument may be drawne from the meanes of reforming and reſtoring a Church when it is corrupted, which is by entring into Covenant a new with God, 2 *Chron.* 15.10. & 29.10. & *Neh.* 9.38. & 10.28, 29. *Jer.* 50.4, 5. The reaſon may be taken thus: If a Church decayed is to be reſtored and reformed by renuing Covenant with God, then it was inſtituted and erected at the firſt by way of Covenant: The reaſon of which Conſequence is, becauſe abuſes and corruptions are to be reformed by bringing things back to the firſt Inſtitution: Thus Chriſt reformes the abuſes of marriage, by bringing them to the firſt Inſtitution of that Ordinance; *From the beginning it was not ſo*, Mat. 19.8. And thus *Paul* reformeth the Abuſes of the Lords Supper, by telling them what was the firſt Inſtitution thereof, 1 *Cor.* 11.23. &c. And thus the Lord Jeſus calling on the declining Church of *Epheſus* for reformation, *bids her remember from whence ſhee is fallen, and repent and doe her firſt workes*, Rev. 2.5. *Argu.* 3.

Now the Aſſumption is plaine from the Texts above alledged, that at the reforming of a Church, there is to be a renuing of Covenant; and thence it follows, that at the firſt erecting of a Church, there was the making of a Covenant with God, for els this renuing of Covenant would not have been the way to reforme it.

The fourth Argument is taken from that which doth diſſolve a Church, which is the diſſolving or breaking of the Covenant, *Zach.* 11.9, 10, 14. If diſſolving the Covenant be that which doth diſſolve the Church, then the making of Covenant is that which conſtitutes a Church. The reaſon of the Conſequence is plaine, becauſe otherwiſe the Covenant might be diſſolved & the Church ſtand ſtill, if it were not the making of the Covenant that did conſtitute the Church: But if diſſipating ſtones in a building doe diſſolve the houſe, then the compacting and conjoyning of them is that which makes the houſe; If ſeparation of ſoule and body be that which deſtroyes the man, that then we ſay he is not: it muſt needs be the uniting of them, that did conſtitute & make the man: and ſo it is in this caſe. And that diſſolving the Covenant is that which diſſolves a Church, is plaine from the Text alledged, *Zach.* 11. Where the breaking of the two ſtaves, of beautie and *Argu.* 4.

bands; that is, the unchurching of the Jewes, is interpreted to be the breaking of the Covenant that God had made with that people, and the brotherhood that was between *Judah* and *Israel*.

Argu.5. The fifth Argument is taken from the distinction which God hath appointed amongst Churches, and the confounding of all Churches into one, if there be not this Covenant to distinguish them. If Churches be distinct Societies, and may not be confounded, then Churches are compacted and combined by Covenant: But the former is true. *Ergo*.

That Churches are distinct Societies, is plaine in the Scripture, where we have mention of many Churches in one Countrey or Province, *Gal.* 1. 1. 1 *Thes.* 2. 14. Of seven Churches in Asia, *Rev.* 1. 4. and of all the Churches, 1 *Cor.* 14. 33. *Rev.* 2. 23. *Ephesus* is not *Smyrna*, nor *Smyrna* is not *Thyatira*, nor either of them *Pergamus*, but each one distinct of themselves, having Officers of their owne, which did not belong to others: vertues of their owne for which others are not praised, corruptions of their owne, for which others are not blamed; If it were not thus, then when *Laodicea* is condemned for lukewarmenesse, or *Ephesus* for declining, all the rest should be reproved also: And when *Philadelfia* is praised, all the rest should be praised also, which we see is otherwise. Now from hence the Consequence is certaine, that therefore they are combined by some Covenant each one amongst themselves; for there is nothing els without this that wil sufficiently distinguish them. The Spirit of God and Faith in their hearts, is common to all Christians under heaven, and in heaven also, and therefore this is not the thing that makes distinction. Nor is it habitation in the same Towne together, for that may be common to such Christians as are not of this Church, and usually is to many that are no Christians. As it is with Companies in *London*; as the Company of Goldsmiths, &c. that many others dwell in the same Towne with them, yea it may be in the same streete that are not of their Company: and therefore it is not meerely habitation that doth distinguish them from others, but some combination and agreement amongst themselves; So it is not habitation in the same Towne that distinguisheth Churches, and Church-members from other men, but their mutuall agreement and combination and joyning themselves together in an holy Covenant with God.

"If the Spirit of God and Faith in their hearts cannot distinguish one "Church from another, because these are common to them all, then how "can Covenant distinguish them, sith all Churches are joyned by Cove-"nant one as well as another? *Object.*

It is not a Covenant simply or a Covenant in generall that doth constitute a Church, or distinguish one Church from another, but a Covenant with application and appropriation to these persons. Even as it is in marriage, though all married couples be united by Covenant, and a Covenant wherein one couple promiseth the same duties that another couple doth, yet a Covenant with application and appropriation of the duties covenanted to this man and this woman in particular, such a Covenant is the very thing that make a couple, man and wife together, and gives them mutuall power over each other, as husband and wife, and puts a distinction between them and all other men and women in the world. And so it is in this case; a Covenant to performe Church-duties with application and appropriation to such persons, is the very thing that constitutes a Church, and distinguisheth one Church from another. *Answer.*

And thus much concerning the former of the two particulars, to shew the use of Church-Covenant, *viz.* that it is that whereby a company doe become a Church.

The second particular is this, that taking hold of the Covenant, or joyning in it, is that which makes a particular person a member of a Church. And this followes upon the former, and that may be the first Argument to prove it.

If joyning in Covenant be that which makes a company to become a Church, then taking hold of that Covenant is requisite to make a particular person become a member of the Church: But the first is true, as hath been shewed before; Therefore the second is true also: If compacting and conjoyning of stones and pieces of Timber, be that that makes an house, then a particular stone cannot become a part of that house, till it be compacted and conjoyned to the rest: But the former is true, even in the Church of God, which is the spirituall Spouse and Citie of God, living stones, Christians, beleevers must be compacted together, and builded up together, *Ephes.* 2. 21, 22. *Psal.* 122. 3. and therefore the latter is true also, that a particular Christian becomes a member of the Church, a part of that building by being combined with the rest. *Argu.* 1.

Argu. 2. A ſecond Argument may be drawne from the Scripture, *Iſa.* 56. 3, 6, 7. *Let not the ſonne of the ſtranger, that hath joyned himſelfe to the Lord, ſpeake, ſaying, the Lord hath utterly ſeparated me from his people, &c. The ſonnes of the ſtrangers that joyne themſelves to the Lord, to ſerve him, &c. and take hold of my Covenant, even them will I bring to my holy mountaine, and make them joyfull in my houſe of Prayer, &c.* Concerning which Scripture, note three things to the preſent purpoſe. Firſt, That theſe ſtrangers were members of Chriſt, true beleevers, joyned to God by Faith; for it is ſaid, *they have joyned themſelves to the Lord*, v. 3 & v. 6. that they loved the name of the Lord, ſerved him, and kept his Sabbaths, *v.* 6. and yet for all this they were not as yet joyned as members of the viſible Church, for if they had been joyned, there would have been no cauſe for ſuch a complaint, *the Lord hath ſeparated me from his people*, v. 3. Beſides, bringing them into the Church as members, and granting them the priviledge of members, is promiſed as a reward and bleſſing upon this their joyning to the Lord by faith and obedience, *v.* 7. And therefore it is not the ſame, but a diſtinct thing from it; the one being promiſed as a reward and bleſſing upon the other. Secondly, The Lord promiſeth that he will make them members of his Church: *Them will I bring to my holy mountaine, and make them joyfull in my houſe of Prayer.* Thirdly, That among other things requiſite to make them members, this was one, *viz.* the taking hold of that Covenant which was between the Church of *Iſrael* and God, *v.* 6. So that hence we may gather, that men may be members of Chriſt, joyned to the Lord by faith and love, and yet for the preſent not be members of the viſible Church: And that when God is ſo gracious to true beleevers, as to make them members of his viſible Church, it is requiſite that they joyne in Covenant before.

Object. "*But might not faith in Chriſt, beleeving in heart on the God of Iſ-*
"*rael, be all the taking hold of the Covenant that is here meant.*

Anſwer. Not ſo, but over and above that, here is alſo meant their open profeſſion of their Faith in the God of *Iſrael*, and open binding of themſelves by Covenant to all ſuch duties of faith and obedience, as God required of the Church of *Iſrael*, and the members thereof. Now diſtinctly take the Anſwer to this Objection in three or foure particular Propoſitions. Firſt, There was a Covenant between the Church of *Iſrael* and God, *Exod.* 19. 5, 6, 7, 8. *Ezek.* 16. 8. *Deut.* 29. 10. *&c.* Secondly, This Covenant was mutuall; not onely

onely a promiſe on Gods part to be their God, and to take them for his people, but alſo reciptocally on their part to give up themſelves unto God to be his people, and to doe the dutie of people to their God; The Covenant is not meerely to receive from God, and promiſe nothing back againe to him; nor doth God binde himſelfe therein, and leave men at libertie, but it is mutuall on both parts, as theſe Scriptures declare; *Gen.* 17. 1. *Exod.* 19 7 8. *Deut.* 5. 27. & 26. 16, 17. *Hoſ.* 2. 23. & *Zach.* 13. 9. Thirdly, Hereupon it followes, that if men had not promiſed, and alſo performed, in ſome meaſure of truth, the duties of Faith and obedience unto God, they had not taken hold of the Covenant, but had diſcovenanted themſelves, notwithſtanding all the promiſes of God unto their Fathers or others. Thus though God promiſed *Abraham* to be a God to him, and to his ſeede in their generations, *Gen.* 17. 7. yet the *Iſhmaelites* and *Edomites* deſcending from *Abraham*, were diſcovenanted by not promiſing nor performing thoſe duties of Faith and obedience, which God required on the peoples part: when a Covenant containes promiſes on Gods part, and duties alſo on mans, he doth not take hold of the Covenant that takes one part, and leaves another. Fourthly, To beleeve what God promiſed in the Covenant for his part, and to promiſe in a private way the duties of obedience on mans part, was not ſufficient to make theſe ſtrangers members of the Church, but they muſt doe it openly and in the view of the Church, elſe the Church could have had no warrant to have admitted ſuch into their Fellowſhip, if their faith and obedience had not been viſibly profeſſed, *Exod.* 12. 43. 48 2 *Chron.* 23. 19.

And in as much as the Covenant was mutuall, when theſe ſtrangers did manifeſt their taking hold of the Covenant, they manifeſted and profeſſed both Faith and obedience, both that they beleeved what God promiſed, and that they would be obedient to what he required; If any ſhould have claimed Church-fellowſhip, ſaying, I beleeve the promiſes, but would not binde himſelfe to any duties of Evangelicall obedience, this had been a taking hold of the Covenant by the halves, a taking of one part of it in ſeeming and pretence, and a leaving of another; but it would not have been ſufficient to have brought a man into the fellowſhip of the church: Such of the Congregation of *Iſrael* as would not come to *Hieruſalem* to enter into Covenant, were to be ſeparated from the Church

in the dayes of *Ezra*, *Ezra* 10. 8. And therefore ſuch as being ſtrangers ſhould refuſe to enter into it, could not be admitted into the Church; So that the taking hold of Gods Covenant, which is there required to make theſe ſtrangers members of the Church, is a beleeving in heart on the God of *Iſrael*, and an open profeſſion that they did beleeve, and likewiſe a promiſe of obedience or ſubjection unto the God of *Iſrael*, and an open profeſſing of ſuch obedience and ſubjection; and that is the joyning in Covenant which we ſtand for, before a man can be a member of a Church, even an open profeſſion of Faith and of Obedience.

Argu. 3. A third Argument is taken from thoſe Scriptures which ſhew that men become members by being added to the Church, or being joyned to them, *Act.* 2. 47. & 5. 13. & 9. 26. If men become members of the Church by being added or joyned, then joyning in Covenant (or profeſſing of ſubjection to the Goſpel or Covenant of God) is that whereby a man becomes a member of a Church: But the former is true, as appeares by the Scriptures forementioned, and therefore the latter is true alſo.

But all the doubt in this Argument will be concerning the conſequence of the *Major* Propoſition; but that may be made good by this reaſon, and the confirmation of it, *viz.* that a man cannot be added or joyned to the Church by any other meanes without this joyning in Covenant. The truth of which Aſſertion will appeare by ſhewing the inſufficiency of all other means, without this joyning in Covenant, and that may be done in Anſwer to the Objections enſuing.

Object. 1. "*When men were added to the Church, it may be, no more is meant* "*but that God did convert them and worke Faith in their hearts, and that* "*converting of them was the adding of them to the Church.*

Anſwer. This cannot be all; for, firſt, *Saul* was converted and had faith wrought in his heart, and yet he was not at the firſt received for a member of the Church at *Hieruſalem* (though he aſſayed to be joyned unto them,) till they were better ſatisfied in his ſpirituall eſtate by the teſtimony of *Barnabas*, Act. 9. 26, 27, 28. And thoſe ſtrangers, *Iſa.* 56. (as was ſaid before) were joyned to the Lord by being converted, and having Faith wrought in their hearts, and yet they doe lament it with griefe, that they were not joyned as members to the viſible Church: *The Lord hath ſeparated me from his people*, ſay they, *ver.* 3. The old ſaying is true concerning the viſible

viſible Church, *There are many wolves within, and many ſheepe without.* Secondly, Thoſe that were joyned were beleevers before they joyned; for it is ſaid, *divers were added,* ver. 14. Thirdly, Thoſe that were added to the Church, were added and joyned to them by ſuch an act as others durſt not put forth, *Act.* 5. 13. *Of the reſt durſt no man joyne unto them,* and therefore it was not by the irreſiſtable act of God in converting of them, but by ſome voluntary act of their owne choice and conſent; for Gods converting grace depends not upon mans daring, or not daring to receive it. If to be joyned be no more but to be converted, then when it is ſaid, *Some durſt not be joyned,* the meaning ſhould be, they durſt not be converted, nor ſuffer Faith to be wrought in them; which is groſſe Arminianiſme, ſuſpending the converting grace of God upon the free will of the creature. Fourthly, And as this joyning which others durſt not doe, cannot be meant of being converted; So if it be well conſidered, what the thing was wherein they durſt not joyne, it may appeare that it was nothing els but this, that they durſt not agree, and engage themſelves to be of their body and ſocietie; that is, they durſt not joyne in Covenant with them. For it cannot be meant of dwelling in the Towne with them, for this they both durſt doe and did: nor is it onely of joyning to heare the Word in their aſſembly, for this alſo they durſt doe, and many did it in great multitudes, ſo that many by hearing the Word became beleevers, and were added to the Lord both of men and women, *ver.* 14. at this very time when it is ſaid of ſome they durſt not joyne unto them: Nor is it of joyning to them in affection, or approbation of their way, for this they alſo durſt doe and did expreſſe ſo much in magnifying and commending them, when yet they durſt not joyne unto them, *ver.* 13. Which magnifying of them doth imply that they heard their doctrine, and ſaw their practiſe, and approved it, and highly commended them for the ſame: Wherefore ſeeing this joyning, which ſome durſt not doe, cannot be meant of being converted, nor of joyning in habitation, nor of joyning in affection, nor in hearing the Word in their Aſſembly, nor of approbation, and expreſſions that way, it remaineth that it muſt be meant of joyning in that neere relation of Church-fellowſhip amongſt them, ſo as to be engaged by voluntary conſent and agreement to be members of their Church. Fiftly, If joyning to the Church, were no more but to be converted,

verted, then he that were converted were joyned as a member of every visible Church throughout the world, which were a great confusion of that Order, and distinction of Churches, which the Lord hath appointed.

Obj. 2. "*Men may be joyned to the Church, in heartie affection and love, and* "*yet without any Covenant.*

Answ. True, but this will not make them members of that Church, for then *Saul* was a member of the Church at *Hierusalem*, afore he was joyned a member, for he was joyned to them in heartie affection afore, and therefore assayed to joyne as a member; and so were they that durst not joyne, *Act.* 5. 13. yea then a man should be a member of many Churches, yea of all Christian Churches in the world; for he is to love them, and beare heartie affection to them all; The true members of the Churches in *England* are united in heartie affection, to the Churches in *Scotland*, in *Holland*, in *Fraunce*, in *New-England*, &c. And yet they are not members of all these Churches, nor subject to their censures as members are.

Obj. 3. "*But the reason of that is because they doe not dwell among them in* "*the same Towne.*

Answer. Neither would habitation with them in the same Towne, make a man a member of the Church there, if there be no more then so. Suppose *Saul* to have dwelt in the same house afore his conversion in which he dwelt after, which is not unpossible nor unlikely; yet we see he was no member of the Church at *Hierusalem*, afore his conversion, no nor of some time after, though he might have dwelt in an house in the midst of the Christians, and Church-members there. The members of the *Dutch* and *French* Churches in *London*, or other Townes in *England*, are not members of the *English* Congregations or Churches, no more then the *English* are of theirs, and yet they dwell promiscuously together in the same Streete of the same Towne. Towne-dwelling would not make a man a free-man of a Company in *London*, or some other Corporation; for many others dwell in the Towne with them; yea it may be in the same streete, that are not free of their Company, and so it is in this case.

Object. 4. "*But the reason why such as dwell in Towne with the Church, are* "*not members thereof, may be, because they frequent not their Assem-* "*blies.*

Idiots

Idiots and Infidells might come into the publick meetings among the *Corinthians*, 1 *Cor.* 14. 23, 24, 25: yet Idiots and Infidells were not therefore members of the Church. And *Saul* after his converſion might have come in among the Church in time of publick duties, and have ſeene and heard all that they had done: yet this would not have made him of one body with them. Some *Indians*, *Moores*, and other naturall perſons come into our meetings in *New-England*, ſome of their owne accord, and others by the Command or Counſell of their Maſters and Governours, yet no man can ſay, that all theſe are hereby made Church-members. Wherefore ſeeing neither converſion, nor loving affection, nor cohabitation, nor coming into their meetings, doth joyne a man as a member of the viſible Church (for ſome men have all theſe, and yet are not members, and others are ſometimes members of the viſible Churches, and yet want ſome of theſe, are hypocrites and want ſound converſion) it remaineth therefore that as ſound converſion makes a man fit matter for a Church; So profeſſion of his Faith, and of his ſubjection to the Goſpel, and the Churches approbation, and acceptance of him (which is the ſumme of Church-Covenant) is the formall cauſe that gives him the being of a member. *Anſw.*

"*But joyning doth not alway ſignifie joyning in Covenant; Philip joy-*
"*ned to the Eunnuchs chariote, and duſt to mens feete,* Act. 8. 29. &
"Luke 10, 11. *and yet there was no Covenant, and therefore men may*
"*joyne to the Church without any Covenant.* *Object.* 5.

The word indeed may expreſſe any cloſe joyning, whether naturall, (as the branch is joyned to the Vine, or an arme or other member to the body) or artificiall, as when two ſtickes were joyned to become one in *Ezekiels* hand, *Ezek.* 37. Or when Carpenters or Maſons doe joyne pieces of ſtone or Timber together, to make one houſe, *Neh.* 4. 6. *Ezr.* 4. 12. but is not onely the force of the word that is ſtood upon. But when joyning is uſed to expreſſe ſuch joyning, wherein a man voluntarily takes on him a new relation, there it alwayes implyes a Covenant, whether the relation be morall and civill, or religious and Eccleſiaſticall. We ſpeake of voluntary relation, for there are naturall relations, as betweene parents and children: and theſe need no Covenant, there is no Covenant to make a man a Parent, or a childe; There are alſo violent relations, as between Conquerour and Captives, and *Anſw.*

in theſe there is no Covenant neither; but others are voluntary, and theſe alwayes imply a Covenant, and are founded therein, whether they be morall and civill (as between husband and wife, *Pro.* 2. 17. between Maſter and ſervants, *Luk.* 15. 15. between Prince and ſubject, between Partners in Trade, 2 *Chro.* 20. 35, 36, 37. where the Covenant or agreement is, that men ſhall bare ſuch a ſhare of charges, and receive ſuch a ſhare of profits:) or religious, as between Miniſter and people, between the Church and the members: all theſe are done by way of Covenant. A man cannot joyne himſelfe to a woman as her husband, but by way of Covenant: A man cannot joyne himſelfe to another as a ſervant, or apprentiſe, but by way of Covenant; And ſo may we ſay of all the reſt; nor into any body corporate, but by the ſame way and means. If men be united into a body politick or incorporate, a man cannot be ſaid to be joyned to them by meere heartie affection, unleſſe withall he joynes himſelfe unto them by ſome Contract or Covenant. Now of this nature is every particular Church, a body incorporate, 1 *Cor.* 12. 27. *Yee are the body of Chriſt, &c.* and hath power to caſt out, 1 *Cor.* 5. 13. and to forgive and receive in Penitents, 2 *Cor.* 2. 7, 8 as a body incorporate; and therefore he that will joyne unto them, muſt doe it by way of Covenant or Agreement; and ſo this Anſwer to this Objection, may be a fourth Argument to prove the point in hand, that joyning in Covenant is that which makes a man, a member of a Church.

Argu. 4. All voluntary relations, all relations which are neither naturall nor violent, are entred into by way of Covenant.

But he that joynes into a Church as a member, or enters into a Church, doth take upon him ſuch a relation; Therefore joyning to a Church as a member, is by way of Covenant.

Argu. 5. A fifth Argument may be drawne from the power which all Churches, Officers and members, have over all their members in the Lord. If all Churches, Officers, and members, have power in the Lord over all their members, then joyning in Covenant is neceſſary to make a man a member of a Church, but the former is true, therefore the latter is true alſo.

The Aſſumption in this Argument, that all Churches have power over their members, is proved from 1 *Cor.* 5. 4, 5. 13. where the Apoſtle reproveth the *Corinthians* for ſuffering the Inceſtuous

ceſtuous man amongſt them, and commands them to deliver him to Satan, and caſt him out from amongſt them. Now this he would not have done, if they had had no power over him, or if there had been any roome for them to ſay, wee have nothing to doe with him, wee have no power over him. And the ſame is prooved in other Scriptures alſo; as, *Mat.* 18. 17. *Pſal.* 149. 6. 7, 8, 9.

And the Conſequence of the *Major* Propoſition, *viz.* that then members doe engage themſelves by Covenant, is proved by this reaſon; That Churches have no power over ſuch as have not engaged themſelves by Covenant, and committed power unto them, by profeſſing to be ſubject to all the Ordinances of Chriſt amongſt them.

The truth whereof may appeare by two Reaſons:

Firſt, Becauſe all Chriſtians have power and right, *jure divino*, to chooſe their owne Officers to whom they commit their ſoules, *Act.* 6. & 1. & 14 23. where the word χειροτονησαντες, imports chooſing by Election: and ſo the word is uſed and tranſlated, 2 *Cor.* 8. 19. *he was choſen by the Churches, &c.* It is not miniſteriall gifts that makes a man a Miniſter to every Church, nor inveſteth him with ſpirituall power over them, nor though he dwell amongſt them, unleſſe they call him, and he accept of that call: And as they have power to chooſe their Officers, ſo likewiſe to chooſe their brethren according to God, *Rom.* 14. 1. Now if they have power to chooſe their Officers and brethren, then none can have power over them as Officers and brethren, without their owne conſent, and whom they never choſe, nor promiſed by any Covenant or Engagement to be ſubject to the Lord.

Secondly, If the Church ſhould exerciſe any Act of Church-power over ſuch a man as never entred into Covenant with them (ſuppoſe to Excommunicate him for whoredome or drunkenneſſe, or the like) the man might proteſt againſt their Act, and their Sentence, as *Coram non judice*, and they could not juſtifie their proceedings, if indeed there have paſſed no Covenant or Engagement between him and them. If he ſhall ſay, you have nothing to doe to paſſe Sentence or Cenſure upon me, I am none of your Church, but of another Church; Suppoſe in *Holland*, in *France*, *&c.* and I am onely here now for Merchandiſe ſake, or upon ſome other occaſion: what ſhall they ſay to ſtop his mouth, if there never

yet passed any Covenant between him and them.

Object. "*But Ministers have power over the people by the word of God,* "Heb. 13. 17. 1 Thes. 5. 12. 1 Tim. 5. 17. *and not by mens engaging* "*themselves by Covenant.*

Answer. But what is it that makes men Ministers to such a people, Officers to such a Church, or maketh them sheepe of my flocke? Is it not those Scriptures that makes every man a Pastour, or Teacher, or Ruler to a people, unlesse they call him to that Office; and then in so doing they Covenant and Engage themselves to be subject to him in the Lord, and then those Scriptures take hold on them. One might as well say, it is not the Covenanting of a wife to her husband that gives him power over her, but the Word of God; For as the Word of God commands people to obey their Ministers, so it commands *wives to be subject to their husbands*, Ephes. 5. 22. And yet all men know, a man cannot take this woman for his wife but by Covenant. So that if shee once makes her selfe a wife by her owne voluntary Covenant, then the word of God takes hold on her, and bindes her to doe the duties of a wife: but if shee hath made no Covenant, the man hath no power over her as her husband, neither is shee his wife; So if men once make themselves members of such a Church, sheepe of such a mans flocke, by their own voluntary Covenant, then the word of God takes hold of them, and bindes them to doe the duties of members to their fellow-brethren, and of people to their Pastours or Ministers. But if they never chose such a man to be their Minister, nor Covenanted to be subject to him in the Lord, he then can have no power over them as a Minister unto them, because they have right to chose their owne Ministers.

Argu. 6. A sixth Argument may be taken from the distinction that is between members, and not members. If there be by the word of God a distinction, between members of the Church and such as are no members, then joyning in Covenant is necessary to the being of a member; but the former is true, as appeares 1 *Cor.* 5. 12. Some are within, and may be judged by the Church, and others are without, and may not: and therefore the latter is true also. And the reason of the Consequence is because there is nothing else without this joyning in Covenant, that can sufficiently distinguish them; It is not Faith and Grace in their hearts, for some men are members of the visible Church, and yet have no Grace,

Grace, and others may have Grace, and yet be no members; and therefore this is not the thing that doth distinguish them, nor is it affection, nor cohabitation, nor every approbation of the Word of God, and the wayes of his Church, nor comming into their Assemblies to heare the Word; But these things were touched before, and therefore may be here the more briefly passed over.

And so much shall suffice to have spoken of the second particular, concerning the use of Church-Covenant, that it is by joyning therein that a particular person becomes a member of a Church.

But here it will be needfull to remove sundry Objections, which may seeme to some to be of great weight against Church-Covenant, that so by the removing of them, the truth may be the more cleared, to fuller satisfaction, if it be the will of God.

Object. 1. "*Church-Covenant is a Terme that is not found in Scripture.*

Answer. First, So is Sacrament, Trinitie, &c. and yet those termes may be lawfully used, because the thing meant thereby is found.

Secondly, But seeing the Covenant is between the Lord and his Church, as the two parties that are confederate, it is all one whether it be called the Lords Covenant, or the Church-Covenant: As when *Mamre*, *Aver*, & *Eschol* were confederate with *Abraham*, Gen. 14. 13. might not one truely say, *Abraham* was confederate with them? Relatives doe mutually put and establish one another.

Thirdly, The Scripture allowes both the Lords Covenant with the Church, *Eze.* 16. 8. & the peoples covenant or Saints covenant, or Churches Covenant with him, *Deut.* 29. 12. *Psal.* 50. 5. *Jer.* 50. 5.

Fourthly, There is good reason for both the words; both the Lords Covenant, and the Church-Covenant, because both are confederate; And for that of Church-Covenant, there is this reason also, *viz.* to distinguish it from other Covenants, as a marriage-Covenant, *Pro.* 2. 17. and a brotherly Covenant, 1 *Sam.* 20. 8. The Church-Covenant being thus called not onely because they are a Church, or members thereof that make it, but also because they enter into it in reference to Church-Estate and Church-duties: The duties which they bind themselves unto in this Covenant being such especially as concern a Church and the members thereof.

Object. 2. "*But this Church-Covenant puts some disparagement upon the Covenant of Grace, which every beleever is already entred into with God, and seeme to charge the same with insufficiency; for every second Covenant doth argue that the first was not faultlesse,* Heb. 8. 7.

Answ. 1. A second Covenant doth argue that the first was not faultlesse, where the Covenants are contrary one to another, as the covenant of Grace, and the covenant of works are, and so it is most true, that the bringing in of the free Covenant of Grace did argue that righteousnes and life could not be attained by the Law, or Covenant of works; for if there had been a Law given which could have given life, verily righteousnesse should have been by the Law. *Gal.* 3. 21. *Rom.* 8. 3.

2. But if it be the same Covenant that is renewed or made againe, though upon a new occasion, no man can say that entring into the same the second time, or a third, or a fourth, doth disanull the first, or cast disparagement upon the same. The covenant of works given to *Adam* was not blamed or faulted, because it was renewed in *Sinai*. The Covenant of Grace was first given to *Adam* in Paradise after his fall, afterward to *Abraham*, then to the people of Israel under types and shadows; And againe after the coming of Christ in the flesh; yet none of these doth disanull the former, or argue the same to be faulty; and the reason is, because it is still the same Covenant though renewed upon new occasions; and in some particulars in some other manner. And the like we say concerning Church-Covenant, or the Covenant which a man makes when he enters into the Church, *viz.* that it is not another Covenant contrary to the Covenant of Grace, which every beleever is brought into at his first conversion, but an open profession of a mans subjection to that very Covenant, specially in the things which concerne Church estate, into which estate the man is now entring.

Obj. 3. "*It is not lawfull to make such a Covenant as the Church-Covenant,* "*because it is not in our power to keep it, and we do not know whether* "*God will give us power.*

Answ. This ground is very true, that no man hath power of himselfe to any thing that good is, but all a mans power and abilitie must come of God through Christ, 2. *Cor.* 3. 5. *Phil.* 2. 13. *Joh.* 15. 5. But the inference is not good, that therefore it should be unlawfull to ento into Church-Covenant: for 1. By the same reason, all promises are unlawfull, and all covenants whatsoever; as the covenant of marriage, the covenant of service, yea and the personall covenant of Grace, when a particular soule promiseth faith and new obedience; for there is none of these, no not the covenant of Marriage,

Marriage, which a man is able of himself to keep, as the adultery of *David* and *Bathsheba*, among others, doth plainly prove.

2. God hath promised to give power to them that in self-deniall seek it of him, and trust to his promise for it. *Ezek.* 36. 27. *Jer.* 31. 33. *Rom.* 6. 14. *Jer.* 32. 40. The true inference therefore from this ground, from mans disabilitie to performe were this, that therefore a man should not enter into Church-Covenant in his owne strength, for that was *Peters* fault in promising not to deny Christ, but to die with him rather: but Church-Covenant, as also all other promises, should be entred into, in an humble looking up to Christ Jesus for help and assistance to performe. *Thou therefore my sonne, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus,* 2. *Tim.* 2. 1.

"*God disalloweth covenants of mans making (and so our Church-*
"*Covenant) in those words, But not by thy Covenant.* Ezek. 16. 61. *Obj.* 4.

God doth not reprove them there for making Covenant, for then he were contrary to himselfe, who elsewhere called them to do it, *Exod.* 29. *Deut.* 29. and commended them for it, *Psal.* 50. 5. Yea and in that very place of *Ezek.* 16. acknowledgeth a Covenant betweene him and them, *ver.* 60. 62. But the meaning is, he would do them good, but not for their good keeping the Covenant of works, for they had very sinfully broken it, *ver.* 59. but even as he saith elsewhere, not for their sakes, or for their righteousnesse, *Ezek.* 36. 32. *Deut.* 9. 4, 5, 6. But what force is there in this arguing, *viz.* If God will do us good, but not for our good keeping the covenant of works, then it is not lawfull to promise obedience to the covenant of Grace, in such things as concerne Church estate; All men may easily see that here is a plaine *non sequitur*. *Answ.*

"*This entring into Covenant may keep out many good men from joyn-*
"*ing to the Churches, because they are not satisfied about it: and therefore*
"*it is better laid aside.* *Obj.* 5.

It is not impossible, but good men may for a time be unsatisfied about it, till they understand the nature and use of it, and yet the thing be warrantable enough for all that in the sight of God; the Tribes were troubled at the Altar set up upon the banks of Jordan by the two Tribes and an halfe, till they understood the intent and use of it, and for what purpose it was erected: and then they were satisfied. *Josh.* 22. And the same may be said of *Peters* eating with the Gentiles, which at the first was very offensive to them of the *Answ.*

circumcision, till they understood what *Peter* had to say for his defence therein, and then they rested well satisfied; *Act.* 11.

But if men understand what the Church-Covenant is, there is no reason that good men should be troubled at it; it being nothing else but a promise of obedience unto the Gospel of Christ; or of such duties as the Gospel requireth of all Christians in Church-estate: For, will good men refuse to obey the Gospel, or submit to the ordinances of Christ? or will they refuse to professe and promise so much? If a man understand what it is, and what we meane by it, and yet refuse to enter into it when he hath opportunitie thereto, such refusing is no part of his goodnesse, but is to be reckoned amongst his corruptions; It is ignorance at the best, and if not so, then it may be perversenesse of will, or some want of will to performe obedience to the Gospel. And surely there is smal hope that such would yeeld subjection and obedience to the Gospel, who do refuse to professe or promise it.

Obj. 6. "*But the Scripture*, Act. 2. 41. *tels of joyning to the Church with-*
"*out any Covenant. For it was not possible that* 3000. *should enter into*
"*covenant in one day.*

Answ. Two things may be said in Answer to this Objection.

First, that 3000. were not so many, but that joyning in Covenant might easily be done by them all, in one day. For, 1. it was at Pentecost, at which time of the yeer the dayes were at the longest: And, 2. the Scripture tels us, that *David* made a Covenant with all the Tribes of Israel in one day, 2. *Sam.* 5 1, 2, 3. The Articles of the covenant betweene *David* and the Tribes, and so betweene this 3000. and the Lord might be openly declared, and they both the one and the other might by some signe or other, expresse their consent thereunto in one day.

Secondly, as joyning in Covenant is a thing that might be done, so it is more then probable that indeed it was done, by those 3000. soules. For it is said, *ver.* 41. *that they gladly received the word*, that is, they openly professed that they did with all their hearts receive it, for this receiving of the Word is noted as a condition, upon which they were admitted to baptisme, and therefore it was not onely an inward receiving of it in their hearts, but also an open professing that they did receive it; for an inward receiving of it in their hearts, without an open professing thereof outwardly, would not have been sufficient for the admitting of them unto Baptisme.

Now

Now this Word which they received was an exhortation to Repentance for ſinne, and to Faith in the promiſe, *ver.* 38. 39. and to obedience in ſevering themſelves from others, and ſaving themſelves from that untoward generation, *ver.* 40. And therefore when they openly profeſſed, that they gladly received this word, there was an open profeſſing of their Repentance for ſinne, *ver.* 40. of their Faith in the promiſe, and of obedience to the Commandement, which is nothing elſe, but the very ſumme of Church-Covenant: yea, and further, their very preparation to this repentance, faith and obedience, in that true compunction and ſorrow of ſoul, was alſo openly made manifeſt, *ver.* 37.

"*But yet there would not be ſuch long narrations, of every one ſeve-* *Reply.*
"*rally as now are uſed, when men do enter into Church-Covenant, when*
"*each one makes a good long ſpeech, in the profeſſion of his Faith and Re-*
"*pentance.*

When the thing is certaine, as was ſhewed before, that they did openly profeſſe repentance, faith and obedience, it is not difference in the length or largeneſſe of their ſpeeches in expreſſing of themſelves, that can make any difference in the thing: *Majus & minus non diverſificant ſpeciem.* And we denie not but they might be briefer, becauſe there was not ſuch need they ſhould be long in regard of ſome difference betweene them and us, their time and ours: Firſt there were the Apoſtles preſent to heare their confeſſions, and to judge thereof, who were men of very good diſcerning, and therefore briefer expreſſing of mens ſelves might ſuffice; whereas the beſt Chriſtians, yea the beſt Miniſters amongſt us are not to be compared to the Apoſtles; and therefore as we need more time for ſtudy, and for preparation for our Sermons then they did: ſo likewiſe we need more time to heare, and try the ſoundneſſe of mens repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Yet this we may adde withall, that if the Apoſtles and thoſe primative Chriſtians, men of ſuch excellent diſcerning were ſometimes deceived, and could not alwayes ſo diſcern, but that ſome Hypocrites would creep into the Church: as the example of *Ananias* and *Saphira* doth witneſſe; how much more need is there, that the Churches of God in theſe dayes (being far inferiour to them) ſhould be very watchfull and circumſpect in *Anſw.*

trying the ſpirituall eſtates of them that offer to come into the Church?

Secondly, their times alſo differed from ours: for their Chriſtianitie was a matter of reproach and danger of excommunication, *Joh.* 9. 22. of impriſonment, *Act.* 4. 3. and 5. 18. and the like. And therefore to ſee men now to make open profeſſion of their faith in Chriſt Jeſus, whoſe ſervants and diſciples were ſo hated, and who himſelfe but a while before was crucified, this was not an ordinarie matter: and therefore in words, men might be the briefer when they came to be received into the Church: But our times in *New England* do not perſecute Chriſt, and Chriſtians, and Chriſtian Churches, but countenance them, and protect them; and therefore there is more need now to be more ſtudious in examination of mens eſtates when they offer themſelves for Church members: when the Jews were in favour, many of the people of the Land became Jews, *Eſth.* 8. 17.

Obj. 7. "*But why is there ſo little proofe of this Church-Covenant in the New* "*Teſtament?*

Anſw. 1. Suppoſe the New Teſtament ſaid nothing of it, yet it might have ground ſufficient from the Scriptures of the old Teſtament; for if it was Gods revealed will in thoſe dayes, that a companie ſhould become a Church, and particular perſons become members of that Church by way of Covenant, we may be ſure it is ſo now likewiſe, unleſſe covenanting were peculiar to the Jewiſh Pædigogie; indeed if it had never been uſed in thoſe times, but were ſome new ordinance, peculiar to the dayes of the New Teſtament, in ſuch caſes alſo a ground from the Scriptures of the New Teſtament were neceſſarie, as there is in all ſuch things wherein there is any change or variation, from what was uſed in thoſe times afore Chriſt, as that there ſhould not be Nationall Churches, but congregationall, and not one viſible Church, but many, that there ſhould be baptiſme, and the Lords Supper: theſe are matters that are not found in the old Teſtament, nor were appointed to be uſed in thoſe dayes, and therefore we muſt have warrant for them in the New, and ſo we have. But for the Covenant it is otherwiſe, it is no new ordinance peculiar to the dayes of the Goſpel, nor any Leviticall ordinance peculiar to the Jewiſh Pedigogie; and therefore the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament that give warrant for it, may be ſufficient as hath been ſhewed afore.

2. And

2. And yet there is not wanting good warrant for it, that it ought to be uſed, in the dayes of the New Teſtament. For, 1. the Prophets do foretell it, *Iſa.* 56. 6, 7. and 44. 5. and *Jer.* 50. 5. *Ezek.* 20. 37. and in ſundrie other places, to omit the reſt at this time, becauſe ſome of them have been ſpoken of before; Onely let thoſe words of *Iſa.* 44. 5. be well conſidered, and ſee if they do not plainly hold forth that in the dayes of the New Teſtament, men ſhould openly profeſſe their faith, and ſolemnly bind themſelves by Covenant, to be the Lords people, one ſhall ſay, I am the Lords, and another ſhall call himſelf by the name of *Jacob*, and another ſhall ſubſcribe with his hand, and ſirname himſelf by the name of *Iſrael*. Theſe words are ſo plaine for open profeſſing of faith in the Lord, and open binding of mens ſelves by Covenant unto him, as we conceive nothing need be more.

2. The Apoſtles do ſufficiently teſtifie, that ſuch a thing was practiſed in their dayes, elſe how ſhould we underſtand that fellowſhip in the Goſpel in its full latitude and breadth, *Phil.* 1. 5. if this combining into Church-fellowſhip be no part thereof; yea when it is ſaid, *they continued ſtedfaſtly*, or as the word ἦσαν προσκαρτεροῦντες, may well be tranſlated, *they ſtrongly did cleave together*, or hold together in ſuch a Fellowſhip, which was not preaching and hearing the doctrine of the Apoſtles, nor Sacraments, nor Prayer, but a thing diſtinct from all theſe. If this combining themſelves into a ſpirituall fellowſhip and ſocietie of Church-ſtate be no part thereof, we know not how to underſtand it, nor what that fellowſhip ſhould meane; If Doctrine, and Sacraments, and Prayer had not been particularly mentioned, in the ſame place, it might have been thought that the Fellowſhip in which they ſo ſteadfaſtly clave together had been no more, but their coming together to obſerve theſe ſaid ordinances, and their communion therein. But when all theſe are particularly mentioned, and Fellowſhip mentioned among them, as a thing diſtinct from the reſt, we may not confound it with the reſt. We might as well ſay, that by doctrine is meant Sacraments, and by Sacraments is meant Prayer; as to ſay that by Fellowſhip is meant nothing elſe but the exerciſe of doctrine, and Sacraments, and Prayer. And if theſe as they are diſtinctly named, be diſtinct ordinances, and may not be confounded, then Fellowſhip being named in the ſame manner imports ſomething diſtinct from them all, and may not be confounded with

with them, nor with any of them, no more then the other may be confounded one with another. And if ſo, then as this Fellowſhip may import, the communion of their gift and goods one for the helpe of another, ſo it muſt firſt of all imply a combining of themſelves into Church-ſtate by mutuall agreement, conſent, or covenant.

Furthermore, when the Apoſtle writeth, that by experience of the *Corinthians* liberall contribution to the poore Saints, men glorified God for their profeſſed ſubjection to the Goſpel of Chriſt, 2. *Cor.* 9. 13. he plainly imployes thereby, that the *Corinthians* had made a profeſſion or promiſe of ſuch ſubjection to the Goſpel as did comprehend this particular of diſtributing to the neceſſitie of the Saints, among other things. And their liberall diſtribution which he there ſpeaks of, was looked at as one point of their reall performance of that ſubjection to the Goſpel, which they had before profeſſed, and promiſed. Now the Church-Covenant is nothing elſe, but the profeſſing or promiſing of ſuch ſubjection, and therefore this place is another proofe of Church-Covenant. Beſides, it hath been ſhewed afore in *Argument* 3. that thoſe places which ſpeake of being added to the Church, of joyning, or aſſaying to joyne unto the Church, *Act.* 2. 47. and 5 13. and 9. 26. are not expounded according to the full meaning of them, when they are underſtood of any other joyning, if joyning in Covenant be left out. And therefore the Scriptures of the New Teſtament do beare good witneſſe unto Church-Covenant, though, as we ſaid before, the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament might have been ſufficient if the New Teſtament had ſpoken nothing of it.

Obj. 8. "*But Baptiſme makes men members of the viſible Church, and there-*
"*fore the Covenant is needleſſe.*

Anſw. This is anſwered in the Anſwer to the fourth of the 32. Queſtions, where it is ſhewed at large that Baptiſme is a ſeale of the Covenant betweene God and the Church, but neither makes the Church, nor members of the Church, nor alwayes ſo much as proves men to be members.

Obj. 9. "*This Church-Covenant is a late deviſe, and was not known in anci-*
"*ent time, and therefore is to be rejected.*

Anſw. Firſt, True Antiquitie is that of the Scriptures. Now ſith Church-Covenant is warranted by the Scripture, as hath been ſhewed

ſhewed before in this diſcourſe, it cannot be charged to want true Antiquitie. When the Papiſts are wont to charge the doctrine of Proteſtants with Novelty, and ſuch as was never heard of before *Luther*, the Orthodoxe are wont to anſwer, that if the doctrine do not agree with the Scripture, then let it be condemned for Noveltie; and if it do, it is warranted by the beſt Antiquitie, even the teſtimonie of God himſelf who is the Antient of dayes: Our Faith, ſaith Doctor *White*, is in all points the ſame that is contained in the Scripture, and ſo conſequently of the ſame Antiquitie: and therefore all they that ſay it came up but of late, muſt firſt prove it contrary to the Word of God, or elſe hold their peace. *White, Way*, 44. 1. And the ſame we ſay in this particular of the Church-Covenant.

Secondly, And yet they that ſearch the Stories and Writers of the times and ages next after the Apoſtles, may find ſome teſtimonie of Church-Covenant in thoſe dayes: For inſtance, *Juſtine Martyr* in his Apol. 2. makes mention of three things which were required of all that were admitted into the Church as members, παλιγγενεσιαν, αιτιν, & ὑπόθεσιν, that is regeneration, and ſoundneſſe in the Faith, and a promiſe to walke in obedience to the Goſpel. And generally this was the practiſe of all thoſe times, that never any man was admitted to Baptiſme, nor his children neither, but they put him to anſwer three queſtions, *Abrenuntios?* whereto he anſwered, *Abrenuntio. Credis?* whereto his anſwer was, *Credo:* and *Spondes?* to which he anſwered, *Spondeo*. So that here was an open declaration of his Repentance from dead works, and of the ſoundneſſe of his Faith, in the two firſt particulars, and an open binding himſelf by covenant or promiſe to walke according to the Goſpel, in the third. But much needs not to be ſaid in this point, unto them that do acknowledge Scripture Antiquitie to be ſufficient, though after times ſhould be found to ſwerve from the Rules and Patterns that are therein contained.

"*If Church-Covenant be ſo neceſſarie, then all the Reformed Churches* Obj. 10.
"*are to be condemned as no Churches; for they have no ſuch Co-*
"*venant.*

They that have knowne thoſe Churches, not onely by their Anſw.
writings, and confeſſions of their faith, in Synods and otherwiſe; but alſo by living amongſt them, and being eye-witneſſes of their Order, do report otherwiſe of them, *viz.* that they are combined

together by ſolemne Covenant with God and one another. *Zepperus* ſpeaking of the manner, uſed in the reformed Churches, in admitting the children of Church-members to the Lords Table, when they came to age, and have been ſufficiently catechiſed, and inſtructed in the doctrine of Religion, tells us, that ſuch children are admitted to the Lords table, by publick profeſſion of Faith, and entring into Covenant. "*Conſuetum eſt*, ſaith he, *ut qui per ætatem inque Doctrinâ Catecheticâ profectum ad ſacram Cœnam primum admittuntur, fidei confeſſionem coram totâ Eccleſiâ publicè edant per parentes aut qui parentum loca ſunt, juſſu miniſtri, in Eccleſiæ conſpectum producti: quòdque in illa confeſſione, per Dei gratiam perſtare, ac, juxta illam, vitam inſtituere, inſuper etiam diſciplinæ Eccleſiaſticæ ultrò ac ſponte ſuâ ſubjicere ſeſe velint, ſpondeant atque ſtipulentur, Polit. Eccleſ. lib. 1. cap. 14. p. 158.* that is, The manner is, "that they who by reaſon of age and proficiencie in the doctrine "of Catechiſme are firſt admitted to the Lords Supper, ſhould "publickly before the whole Church make confeſſion of their "faith, being brought forth into the ſight of the Church by their "parents, or them that are inſtead of parents, at the appoint-"ment of the Miniſter; and likewiſe ſhould promiſe and cove-"nant by the grace of God to continue in that Faith which they "have confeſſed, and to lead their lives according to it; yea, and "moreover to ſubject themſelves freely and willingly to the diſ-"cipline of the Church. Theſe words we ſee are full and plaine, that children are not in thoſe Churches received to the Lords Supper, without perſonall confeſſion of Faith, and entring into Covenant before: And if they tooke this courſe with children come to age, there is as much reaſon, or more, that the ſame courſe ſhould be holden with men of yeers, when they are admitted members. And ſo the ſame *Zepperus*, ſpeaking of the conſociation of Churches amongſt themſelves by mutuall confederation, hath theſe words, which as they may be applyed to the combining of many Churches, ſo may they be combining of many members of the ſame Church, "*Κοινωνία illa τῶν ἁγίων, quam in Symbola profite nunc Apoſtolico, nihil aliud hic requirit, & vult, quam obligationem omnium Eccleſiæ membrorum & confœderationem, &c.* "that is, that communion of Saints which we profeſſe in the "Creed, doth require and meane nothing elſe but an obligation "of all the members of the Church, and a binding of them to-

gether

"gether by Covenant. *Polit. Eccleſ. li. 3. c. 8. p. 721.*

To theſe teſtimonies of *Zepperus*, thoſe words may be added of Mr. *Parker* our own countreyman, a man of ſingular note for learning and holineſſe, who alſo himſelfe lived ſometimes beyond Sea in the reformed Churches, and there ended his dayes, ſo that we may ſafely give the more credit to his teſtimonie, he having ſo good meanes fully to know the ſtate and order of thoſe Churches. Now he ſpeaketh of a "*Solennis forma abſque quâ in* "*Eccleſiæ alicujus communionem nullus ritè recipitur*: of a ſolemne "forme, without which no man is rightly received into the com- "munion of the Church, hath theſe words. *Hic mos ille eſt refor-* "*matarum Eccleſiarum non ſolum in lapſis reſtituendis, ſed in extraneis,* "*imò quibuſcunque recipiendis qui ad habitandum alicubi conſident,* "*etſi fortè in Eccleſiâ illius loci quo ante commorabantur, juxtâ hanc* "*formam admiſſi prius fuerant. Examinat Presbyterium, plebis conſen-* "*ſit, quiſque teſtes vitæ ſuæ ſecum adfert, vel teſtimonia ſaltem: pub-* "*licatur nomen cujuſque competentis pro concione, admonetur quiſque* "*ſiquid habeat quod excipiat, ut denunciet presbyteris. Sì nihil contrà* "*adferatur, admittitur quidem, ſed non niſi ſolemni pactione cum Deo* "*& cum Eccleſiâ. Spondet verò Eccleſiæ, ſe ambulaturum prout ſanc-* "*tam illam communionem decet; Diſciplinæ illius Eccleſiæ ſubjacere* "*velle, ſe fratribus illius communionis invigilaturum juxta Chriſti pra-* "*ceptum, Matth. 18. 17. ut præveniantur ſanenturque ſcandala, &* "*illi ad ſtudium bonorum operum provehantur.* That is, This is the "manner of the reformed Churches, not onely in reſtoring ſuch "as have fallen, but in admitting of ſtrangers, yea of all whoever "they be, who do ſit down in any place for habitation, though "perhaps they have been formerly admitted after the ſame man- "ner in the Church where they have formerly dwelt; The Preſ- "bytery doth examine, the people do conſent, every man brings "with him witneſſes of his life, or at leaſt wiſe teſtimonies: The "name of each one that deſires to be a member, is publiſhed in the "Aſſembly, every one is admoniſhed if he have any exception "againſt the party, to bring it to the Presbytery. If nothing be "brought againſt him, then indeed he is admitted; but yet no "otherwiſe, then by a ſolemne covenant with God and the "Church; And to the Church he promiſeth that he will walk as "becometh that holy Fellowſhip, that he will be ſubject to the "diſcipline of that Church, that he will watch over the brethren

" of that Communion, according to the Command of Christ,
" *Mat.* 18. 17. that offences may be prevented and healed, &c.
" *Polit. Eccles. lib.* 3. *cap.* 16. § 4. *Pag.* 171, 172. Much more he hath to the same purpose in that place, alledging sundry Canons and Decrees of Synods of reformed Churches, wherein they have determined that none should be received into their Churches, but by this way of solemne Covenant. And others that have lived amongst them may have been eye-witnesses that this is their usuall practise.

Obj. 11. " *But what shall be said of the Congregations in* England, *if Churches*
" *must be combined by Covenant? Doth not this doctrine blot out all*
" *those Congregations out of the Catalogue of Churches? For what ever*
" *Covenant may be found in the reformed Churches in other parts, yet it*
" *is plaine that the* English *have none.*

Answ. Though we deny not but the Covenant in many of those Congregations is more implicite and not so plaine as were to be desired; (and what is amisse in them, in their materialls; or in want of explicite combining of pure matter, or in any of their wayes, wee will not take upon us to defend) yet we hope we may say of them " with Master *Parker, Polit. Eccles. lib.* 3. *cap.* 16. § 1. *pag.* 167. " *Non abest en realis & substantialis (quanquam magis quàm par erat*
" *implicita) coitio in fœdus, eaque voluntaria professio fidei substantia-*
" *lis: quâ (Deo gratia) essentiam Ecclesiæ idque visibilis hacusque*
" *sartam rectam in Angliâ conservavit*; That is, there wants not that " reall and substantiall comming together, (or agreeing in Cove-
" nant, though more implicate then were meete) and that sub-
" stantiall profession of Faith, which (thanks be to God) hath " preserved the essence of visible Churches in *England* unto this " day.

The reasons why wee are loath to say, that the Congregations in *England* are utterly without a Covenant, are these:

First, Because there were many Christian Churches in *England* in the Apostles time, or within a while after, as Master *Fox* sheweth at large, *Act. & Mon. lib.* 2. beginning *pag.* 137. where he reporteth out of *Gildas*, that *England* received the Gospel in the time of *Tiberius* the Emperour, under whom Christ suffered, and that *Joseph* of *Arimathea* was sent of *Philip* the Apostle from *France* to *England* about the yeare of Christ 63. and remained in *England* all his time, and so he with his fellowes layd the first foundation

of

of Christian Faith among the Britaine people, and other Preachers and Teachers comming afterward, confirmed the same and increased it. Also the said Master *Fox* reporteth out of *Tertullian*, that the Gospel was dispearsed abroad by the sound of the Apostles into many Nations, and amongst the rest into *Britaine*, yea into the wildest places of *Britaine*, which the *Romans* could never attaine unto: and alledgeth also out of *Nicephorus*, that *Simon Zelotes* did spread the Gospel to the West Ocean, and brought the same into the Iles of *Britaine*: and sundry other proofes he there hath for the same point. Now if the Gospel and Christian Religion were brought into *England* in the Apostles times, and by their means, it is like that the *English* Churches were then constituted by way of Covenant, because that was the manner of constituting Churches in the Apostles time, as also in the times afore Christ, as hath been shewed from the Scripture before in this discourse. And if Christian Congregations in *England* were in those times combined by Covenant, then eternitie of Gods Covenant is such, that it is not the interposition of many corruptions that may arise in after-times that can disanull the same, except when men wilfully breake Covenant and reject the offers of the Gospel through obstinacy, which we perswade our selves they are not come unto: and consequently the Covenant remaines which hath preserved the essence of Churches to this day; though the mixture of manifold corruptions, have made the Covenant more implicite then were meete.

Secondly, Because there want no good Records (as may be seene in *Seldens History of Tithes*) to prove that in former times in *England* it was free for men to pay their Tithes and Oblations where themselves pleased: Now this paying of Tithes was accounted as a dutie of people to their Minister, or sheepe to their Pastour: and therefore seeing this was by their owne voluntary agreement and consent, their joyning to the Church as members thereof, & to the Ministery thereof as sheepe of such a mans flock, was also by their owne voluntary agreement and consent: and this doth imply a Covenant. It was not the precincts of Parishes that did limit men in those dayes, but their owne choice.

Thirdly, Those Questions and Answers ministred at Baptisme, spoken of before, (viz. *Doest thou renounce? I doe renounce: doest thou beleeve? I doe beleeve: doest thou promise? I doe promise*) as they

were uſed in other places, ſo were they alſo in *England*, and are unto this day, though not without the mixture of ſundry corruptions. Now this doth imply a Covenant. And when the children came to age, they were not to be admitted to the Lords Supper, before they had made perſonall Confeſſion of their owne Faith, and ratified the Covenant which was made at their Baptiſme by their Parents, which courſe indeed afterward did grow into a Sacrament of Confirmation, but that was an abuſe of a good Order.

If here it be ſaid, that the Members of the Pariſhionall Aſſemblies are not brought in by their owne voluntary profeſſion, but by the Authority and Proclamation of the Prince, and therefore they have no ſuch Covenant.

The Anſwer is, that the Chriſtian Prince doth but his dutie when he doth not tollerate within his Dominions any open Idolatry, or the open worſhip of falſe Gods by baptized perſons, but ſuppreſſeth the ſame: and likewiſe when he gives free libertie to the exerciſe of all the Ordinances of true Religion, according to the minde of Chriſt, with countenance alſo and encouragement unto all thoſe whoſe hearts are willingly bent thereunto, *Ezra.* 1. 1, 3, & 7. 13. And therefore this practiſe of his cannot overthrow the freenеſſe of mens joyning in Church-Communion, becauſe one dutie cannot oppoſe nor contradict another. And ſuppoſe that this courſe of the Magiſtrate ſhould ſeeme to be a forcing of ſome to come in for members who were unfit, (in which caſe it were not juſtifiable) yet this doth not hinder the voluntary ſubjection of others, who with all their hearts deſired it. When the *Iſraelites* departed out of *Egypt*, there went a mixed multitude with them, many going with them that were not *Iſraelites* indeed, *Exod.* 12. And in the dayes of *Mordecay* and *Heſther*, many of the people of the lands became *Jewes*, when the *Jewes* were in favour and reſpect, *Eſt.* 8. 17. and ſo joyned to them not of their owne voluntary minde, nor of any ſincere heart towards God, but meerely for the favour or feare of men; yet this forced or feined joyning of ſome could not hinder thoſe that were *Iſraelites* indeed from being *Iſraelites*, nor make the *Jewes* to be no *Jewes*, no Church-members.

And the ſame may be ſaid in this caſe, Suppoſe the Magiſtrates Proclamation ſhould be a cauſe, or an occaſion rather, of bringing

ſome

ſome into the Church, who came not of their owne voluntary minde; but for feare, or for obteining favour, yet this cannot hinder, but others might voluntarily and freely Covenant to be ſubject to the Goſpel of Chriſt: Such ſubjection and the promiſe of it being the thing which themſelves did heartily deſire, though the Magiſtrate ſhould have ſaid nothing in it.

If any ſhall hereupon inferre, that if the Pariſhionall Aſſemblies be Churches, then the members of them may be admitted to Church-priviledges in *New England*, before they joyne to our Churches: Such one may finde his Anſwer in the Anſwer to the tenth of the thirty-two Queſtions; Whereunto we doe referre the Reader for this point. Onely adding this, that this were contrary to the judgement and practiſe of the Reformed Churches, who doe not admit a man for member without perſonall profeſſion of his Faith, and joyning in Covenant, though he had formerly been a member of a Church in another place, as was ſhewed before out of Maſter *Parker*.

Laſtly, If any ſay, that if theſe reaſons prove the *Engliſh* Congregations to have ſuch a Covenant as proves them to be Churches, then why may not *Rome*, and the Aſſemblies of Papiſts goe for true Churches alſo? For ſome man may thinke that the ſame things may be ſaid for them that here in Anſwer to this eleventh Objection are ſaid for the Pariſhes in *England*: Such one muſt remember two things: firſt, that we doe not ſay ſimply, a Covenant makes a company a true Church, but (as was ſaid before) a Covenant to walke in ſuch wayes of worſhip to God and edification of one another, as the Goſpel of Chriſt requireth. For who doubts, but there may be an agreement among theeves, *Pro.* 1. A confederation among Gods enemies, *Pſal.* 83. A conſpiracy among the *Arabians*, the *Ammonites* and *Aſhdodites*, to hinder the building of *Hieruſalem*, Neh. 4. 7, 8. And yet none of theſe are made true Churches by ſuch kind of confederacies or agreements. And ſo wee may ſay of the Aſſemblies of Papiſts, eſpecially ſince the Counſell of *Trent*. If there be any agreement or confederacy among them, it is not to walke in the wayes of the Goſpell, but in wayes contrary to the fundamentall truths of the Goſpel, as Idolatry in worſhip, Hereſie in doctrine, and other Antichriſtian pollutions and corruptions: and therefore if they combined in theſe things, ſuch combinations will never prove them true Churches.

The

The Church is the Pillar and ground of truth, 1 *Tim.* 3. 15. But the Religion of Papists is so farre from truth, that whosoever liveth and beleeveth according to it, without repentance, cannot be saved. Witnesse their doctrine in the point of vilifying the Scriptures, and in point of free-will, and of Justification by works, of the Popes Supremacy, of the Sacrifice of the Masse, of worshipping of Images, &c. In regard of which, and such like, the Holy Ghost saith, that their Religion is a Sea, *become as the blood of a dead man, and every soule in that Sea dyeth,* Rev. 16. 3. And therefore agreement in such a Religion will never prove them to be true Churches; nor any Assemblies of Arrians, Antitrinitaries, Anabaptists, or Familists, supposing them also to be combined by Covenant among themselves.

But now for the Assemblies in *England*, the case is farre otherwise; for the Doctrine of the Articles of Religion which they professe, and which they promise to hold and observe (though some things are amisse in some of those Articles, and though many persons live contrary in their lives) yet the doctrine is such that whosoever beleeveth, and liveth according to it, shall undoubtedly be saved, and many thousands have been saved therein; and therefore Assemblies united by Covenant to observe this doctrine may be true Churches, when the Assemblies of Papists and others may be false, although they also were combined by Covenant: the reason of the difference rising from the difference that is in the doctrine and Religion which they severally professe, and by Covenant binde themselves to observe, the one being fundamentally corrupt, and consequently pernicious: The other in the fundamentall points Orthodoxall and sound.

Secondly, It must be remembred also (which was intimated before) that if fundamentall corruptions be professed in with impenitency and obstinacy, then God may disanull the Covenant on his part, and give a Bill of divorce to such a people, *Jere.* 3. 8. Now experience and the Scripture also doth witnesse of the Jesuited and *Trent*-Papists, that they repented not of the workes of their hands, of worshipping Devills, and Idolls of Gold, &c. neither repented they of their murthers, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornications, nor of their thefts, *Rev.* 9. 20, 21.

But now for the Parish Assemblies in *England*, we hope that we may safely say, they doe not sinne of obstinacy, but of ignorance, having

having not been convinced (and many of them never having had means to be convinced) of the corruptions that are amongst them, in respect of their constitution, and worship, and Ministery, and so the Covenant remaining among them, may prove them to be Churches, when it cannot stand the Papists in like stead, they being impenitent and obstinate: Which we doe not speake to justifie the Parishes altogether, as if there were not dangerous corruptions found in them, nay rather (the Lord be mercifull to the sinnes of his people) wee may lament it with teares, that in respect of their members and Ministery, in respect of their worship and walkings, in many of those Assemblies there are found such apparent corruptions, as are justly grievous to a godly soule, that is enlightened to discerne them, and greatly displeasing to the Lord, and indeed had need to be repented of betime, least otherwise the Lord remove the Candlesticke and unchurch them, *Rev.* 2. 5. In a word, the corruptions remaining are just causes of repentance and humiliation: but yet in as much as the Articles of Religion, which they professe, containe such wholesome doctrine, that whosoever beleeveth and walketh according thereunto, in sincerity, shall undoubtedly be saved, and in as much as the corruptions are not persisted in with obstinacy, therefore wee deny not but they have the truth of Churches remaining.

"*But this opinion of Church-Covenant, is holden by none but the* *Obj.* 12.
"*Brownists, or those of the Separation, and therefore it is not to be re-*
"*ceived.*

This ground cannot be made good, that none but they of the *Answ.* Separation are for Church-Covenant, for all the Reformed Churches generally, as was shewed before in Answer to Objection the tenth, are for it in their judgement & practise; and shall all they be condemned for *Brownists, or maintaining unlawfull Separation from the Church? Also Master *Parker* and Doctor *Ames*, men of our owne Nation, famous for holinesse and learning, and moderation, both of them plead for Church-Covenant, and yet neither of them were Brownists, but bare witnesse against that riged Separation. For Doctor *Ames*, his judgement of Church-Covenant may "be seene in his *Medulla, Theol. lib.* 1. *cap.* 32. § 14, 15, 17. *Fideles* "*non constituunt Ecclesiam particularem, quamvis simul forsan plures* "*in eodem loco conveniant aut vivant, nisi speciali vinculo inter se con-*"*junguntur, &c.* That is, beleevers doe not make a particular

*By Brownists and Separatists you are to understād those of the riged Separation.

" Church, though perhaps there be many of them that meete to-
" gether, and live in the ſame place, unleſſe they be joyned toge-
" ther by ſome ſpeciall bond amongſt themſelves: for ſo one
" Church would many times be diſſolved into many, and many
" Churches confounded into one. Now this bond is a Covenant,
" either expreſſed or implicite, whereby beleevers do binde them-
" ſelves particularly to performe all ſuch duties, both towards God
" and mutually to one another, as pertaine to the nature of a
" Church, and their edification. And thereupon no man is rightly
" admitted into the Church, but by confeſſion of his Faith, and
" ſtipulation, or promiſe of obedience.

Theſe words doe plainely and fully ſhew his judgement of Church-Covenant, to be the very ſame that is held and practiſed in *New-England* at this day. And that he was not for that ſeveritie and regiditie of ſeparation, may be cleared from ſundry of his workes, wherein he plainly and fully beares witneſſe againſt the ſame, and namely, in his *Freſh ſuite againſt Ceremonies*, *pag.* 207. and in his ſecond *Manuduction*, wherein he purpoſely and at large deales in this Argument of Separation. Sure it is Maſter *Canne* in his Booke, wherein he goes about to prove the neceſſitie of ſeparation from the Non-Conformiſts principles, doth profeſſedly and expreſſely oppoſe himſelfe againſt Doctor *Ames* in the point of Separation, which ſhewes how farre the good Doctor was from favouring that way, when they moſt zealouſly therein doe count him to be a ſpeciall oppoſite of theirs, as indeed he was. And for Maſter *Parker*, his judgement of Church-Covenant was heard before in part; where he ſo much approveth the practiſe of the Reformed Churches in this point. And much more may be ſeene of his judgement herein, in the ſixteenth Chap. of the third booke of his *Polit. Eccleſiaſtica*. And yet in the ſame place, and likewiſe *lib.* 1. *cap.* 13, 14. of the ſame Treatiſe he plentifully and plainly ſhewes his diſlike of the wayes of Separation, as is alſo acknowledged in an Admonition to the Reader, prefixed before that Booke, by *I. R. ſuo, ſuorumque nomine*. So that this Aſſertion appeares to be untrue, wherein it is ſaid, that *none but Browniſts and Separatiſts doe approve of Church-Covenant*.

As for the Inference from this ground, that therefore Church-Covenant ſhould not be received, becauſe it is pleaded for and practiſed by the Separatiſts. We Anſwer, that this will not follow, unleſſe

unleſſe it could be proved, that the Separatiſts hold no truth; or if they hold a truth wee muſt not hold it, that ſo it may appeare wee differ from them; Either of which, it were unreaſonable to affirme. If the Papiſts hold ſundry Articles of Faith, as that there is a unitie of the Divine Eſſence, and Trinitie of Perſons, that Jeſus Chriſt is God and man, and that true Meſſiah that was promiſed, and the onely Saviour of the world, and many ſuch like, muſt wee deny theſe things becauſe they are holden by the Papiſts? This were as unreaſonable as to condemne the doctrine of the Reſurrection, becauſe it was maintained by the Phariſees, *Act.* 23. 8. And ſo we ſay of Church-Covenant, holden and practiſed by them of the Separation; as alſo many other truths are maintained by them: No reaſon that truth ſhould be refuſed, becauſe the Separatiſts maintaine it. When Doctor *Bancroft* in a Sermon at *Pauls*-Croſſe, had avouched that the Superioritie of Biſhops above other Miniſters, is by Gods owne Ordinance, and to make the contrary opinion odious, affirmed that *Aerius* perſiſting in it, was condemned for an Heretique by the generall conſent of the whole Church, and that *Martin* and his Companions, doe maintaine the ſame opinion of *Aerius*; What ſaith learned Doctor *Reinolds* hereunto, in a Letter to Sir *Francis Knolls*, who required him "to ſhew his judgement herein: Touching *Martin*, ſaith he, if "any man behave himſelfe otherwiſe then in diſcretion and cha-"ritie he ought, let the blame be laid where the fault is, and de-"fend him not; but if by the way he utter a truth, mingled with "whatſoever elſe, it is not reaſon that that which is of GOD "ſhould be condemned for that which is of man: no more then "the doctrine of the Reſurrection ſhould be reproved, becauſe "it was maintained and held by the Phariſees: Wherefore remo-"ving the odious name of *Martin* from that which is ſinceritie "and love, is to be dealt with, &c.

And the very ſame doe wee ſay to them that would make Church-Covenant to be odious, becauſe it is held by thoſe of the Seperation, who are commonly called Browniſts: If men behave themſelves otherwiſe then they ought, we defend them not therein, but if they hold any truth mingled with whatſoever elſe, wee would not have that which is of God to be condemned, for that which is of man: truth ſhould not be refuſed, becauſe of other corruptions that may be found in them that hold it.

Reply. "*If you with them hold Church-Covenant, you iuſtifie them in all* "*their Wayes of ſeperation and erronious opinions.*

Anſw. Not ſo, for many of them hold that there are no viſible Chriſtians that ſtand members of the Pariſhes in England, and that it is not lawfull to hold any private Religious communion with ſuch perſons; and that the pariſhionall Aſſemblies are none of them true Churches, and that it is not lawfull to hear any of thoſe Miniſters to preach the Word, none of which are juſtified at all by holding Church-Covenant, though they do hold the ſame; There is no ſuch neceſſarie and inſeparable connexion betweene theſe opinions, and that of Church-Covenant, that he that holds this, muſt needs hold the other alſo.

Obje. 13. "*But the time hath been, when your ſelves did not hold Church-Co-* "*venant, as now you do; when you were in England you were not of this* "*mind, and therefore no marvell if your change ſince your coming to New* "*England be ſuſpected, and offenſive. If you change your judgement* "*and practiſe in this manner, God knows whether you may come at laſt,* "*and therefore men may well be afraid of holding with you in this point,* "*which your ſelves did not hold when you lived in your native Countrey.*

Anſw. Some of us when we were in *England*, through the mercie of God, did ſee the neceſſitie of Church-Covenant; and did alſo preach it to the people amongſt whom we miniſtred, though neither ſo ſoone nor ſo fully as were meete, for which we have cauſe to be humbled, and to judge our ſelves before the Lord.

But ſuppoſe we had never knowne nor practiſed the ſame before our coming into this countrey, yet if it be a truth of God, there is no reaſon why we ſhould ſhut our eyes againſt the light, when God holds it forth unto us, nor that others ſhould be offended at us for receiving the ſame. For by the ſame reaſon men might ſtill continue in their ſinnes, and not make any progreſſe in knowledge and holineſſe, that ſo they may not ſeeme unconſtant, which were contrary to the Scripture, wherein we are commanded nor to faſhion our ſelves according to the former luſts of our ignorance. 1. *Pet.* 1. 14. But to be changed, *Rom.* 12. 2. and renued, *Epheſ.* 4. 23. and put off the old man, and put on the new, *Epheſ.* 4. yea to grow in grace and holineſſe, 2. *Pet.* 3. 18. and be ſtronger and ſtronger, *Iob* 17. 9. that our good workes may be more at the laſt, then at the firſt, *Revel.* 2. 19. Sure it is, the Apoſtle tells the *Corinthians* and *Epheſians*, that the time had been when

when they were not the ſame men that now they are when he wrote unto them; and yet he doth not blame them for leaving their former opinions or practiſe, but commends them for it, 1. *Cor.* 6. 11. *Epheſ.* 2. 3. &c. And it is ſaid of *Apollos* an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scripture, that when he came to *Epheſus* the way of God was expounded unto him more perfectly by *Aquila* and *Priſcilla*, whereas before he was inſtructed in the way of the Lord, knowing onely the Baptiſme of *John*: yet this was no diſpraiſe at all to him, that now upon better information he would change his judgement to the better, nor unto them that were the means thereof: *Act.* 18. 25, 26. *Nullus pudor eſt ad meliora tranſire.*

The time hath been, (and we may be humbled for it) when we lived without God in the world, and ſome of us in many ſinfull courſes: and ſhall any be offended, becauſe we are not ſtill the ſame? and when God called us from the wayes of ſin and death, to the Fellowſhip of his grace in Chriſt; yet ſome of us lived a long time in conformity to the ceremonies impoſed in our native Countrey, and ſaw not the evill of them. But when God did open our eyes, and let us ſee the unlawfulneſſe thereof, we cannot ſee but it would have been a with-holding the truth in unrighteouſneſſe, and a great unthankfulneſſe to God for light revealed to us, if we ſhould ſtill have continued in that courſe through an inordinate deſire of ſeeming conſtant: and therefore it is not any juſt cauſe of offence that we have changed our judgement and practiſe in thoſe things, when we once perceived the Word of God to diſallow them.

Indeed it hath been ſometime objected againſt Mr. *Cartwright*, and others, that deſired the reformation of the Churches in *England*, in regard of Diſcipline and Church-Order, that they which ſtood ſo much for Reformation in Diſcipline, did in after times adde and alter ſome things, beyond what they ſaw at firſt, and what themſelves had formerly deſired; and that therefore being ſo mutable, and inconſtant in their apprehenſions, they were not to be regarded, nor hearkened unto: to which Objection Mr. *Parker* makes full Anſwer *in Eccleſ. lib.* 2. *ca.* 36. *p.* 307. where he ſheweth from the Scripture, and the teſtimonie of Biſhop *Jewel*, "Doctor *Reinolds*, and others, that in the Reformation of Reli-"gion God brings not his ſervants into perfection in knowledge "and zeale at the firſt, but by degrees, ſo as they grow and make

"progreſſe in theſe things in ſuch wiſe, that their good works are "more at the laſt then at the firſt, as was ſaid of the Church of "*Thyatira*, even as the man that had been blind, when Chriſt re- "ſtored him to his ſight, could at the firſt but ſee men like trees "walking, and afterward ſaw every man cleerly; and therefore it "is no good arguing to ſay theſe men have altered and corrected "ſuch things from what their apprehenſions were at firſt, and "therefore they are not to be regarded.

Now if this be no good arguing againſt Mr. *Cartwright*, and thoſe that in *England* have been ſtudious of Reformation (as indeed it is not) then it is no good Argument againſt us in this matter of Church-Covenant, to ſay we now hold and practiſe otherwiſe then we have done in former time.

Reply. "*If any ſhall here reply, that change from conformity to the ceremo-* "*nies to Worſhip God more purely is warranted by the Word, and there-* "*fore not blame-worthy, and that the ſame may be ſaid of the caſe of* "*Apollos, of the Corinthians, and Epheſians forementioned, and of* Cart- "*wright, and the reſt in his times.*

Anſw. We anſwer, that this is true, and thereby it appears, that it is not ſimply the changing a mans opinion or practiſe that can be counted blame-worthy, or offenſive, but changing without warrant of the Word; and therefore in point of Church-Covenant, the iſſue muſt not be whether we or others have formerly known and practiſed it, but whether it have ground from Gods Word; For if it have (as we hope have been proved before in this diſcourſe) then the obſerving of it, can be no cauſe of juſt offence unto others, nor imputation of inconſtancy to our ſelves, though in time paſt we had not had ſo much light as to diſcerne the neceſſitie and uſe thereof.

The good Lord pardon every one that prepareth his heart to ſeek God, though he be not cleanſed according to the purification of the Sanctuary: and grant unto all his Churches and ſervants, that their love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgement, that they may diſcerne the things that differ, and approve the things that are excellent, and by his Spirit of truth be led forward into all truth, till Antichriſt be utterly conſumed with the breath of his mouth, and the brightneſſe of his coming, and the holy City new Jeruſalem come down from God out of heaven, as a Bride adorned for her husband the Lambe, the Lord Jeſus, to whom be all glory of affiance and ſervice for ever. *Amen.*

FINIS.

AN ANSWER OF THE ELDERS OF THE SEVERALL CHURCHES IN NEW-ENGLAND unto Nine POSITIONS, SENT OVER TO THEM (By divers Reverend and godly Ministers in ENGLAND) to declare their Judgements therein.

Written in the Yeer, 1639.

And now published for the satisfaction of all who desire resolution in those points.

LONDON,
Printed by T. P. and M. S. for Benjamin Allen.
1643.

The ſeverall *Poſitions* handled in this Treatiſe.

1. *THat a ſtinted Forme of Prayer, or ſet Liturgie, is unlawfull.*
2. *That it is not lawfull to joyne in Prayers, or receive the Sacrament where a ſtinted Liturgie is uſed, or as we conceive your meaning to be in this as in the former Queſtion,* viz. *where that ſtinted Liturgie is uſed.*
3. *That the children of godly and approved Chriſtians, are not to be baptiſed untill their parents be ſet members of a Congregation.*
4. *That the parents of themſelves though of approved piety, are not to be received to the Lords Supper, untill they be admitted as ſet Members.*
5. *That the power of Excommunication, &c. is ſo in the Bodie of the Church, that what the major part ſhall allow, that muſt be done, though the Paſtors and Governors, and part of their Aſſembly be of another mind, and peradventure upon more ſubſtantiall Reaſons.*
6. *That none are to be admitted as ſet Members, but they muſt promiſe not to depart or remove, unleſſe the Congregation will give leave.*
7. *That a Miniſter is ſo a Miniſter to a particular Congregation, that if they diſlike him unjuſtly, or leave him, he ceaſeth to be a Miniſter.*
8. *That a Miniſter cannot perform any miniſteriall Act in another Congregation.*
9. *That Members in one Congregation may not communicate in another.*

AN

AN EPISTLE WRITTEN by the *Elders* of the Churches in NEW-ENGLAND, to those godly Ministers forementioned that sent over the POSITIONS.

Reverend and beloved Brethren:

IN these remote Coasts of the earth, whereunto the good hand of God hath brought us, as we do with much comfort of heart call to mind the many gracious blessings, which both with you, and from you we injoyed in our Christian and holy communion, (the memory and fruit whereof we hope shall never be blotted out) so we have also seene cause to look back to our former administrations there, and to search and trie our wayes; that wherein soever we have formerly gone astray, we might judge our selves for it before the Lord: And that seeing now God hath set before us an open doore of libertie, we might neither abuse our libertie in the Gospel, to runne out into any groundlesse unwarrantable courses, nor neglect the present opportunitie to administer (by the help of Christ) all the holy ordinances of God, according to the patterne set before us in the Scripture; In our native Countrey, when we were first called to the Ministery, many of us took some things to be indifferent and lawfull, which in after times we saw to be sinfull, and durst not to continue in the practise of them there; Afterwards some things that we bare as burthens, that is, as things inexpedient, though not utterly unlawfull; we had no cause to retain and practise the same things here, which would not have been not onely inexpedient, but unlawfull: such things as a man may tollerate when he cannot remove them, he cannot tollerate without sinne when he may remove them; Besides some things we practised there (which we speake it to our shame and griefe)

we never took it into ſerious conſideration whether they were lawfull and expedient or no, but took them for granted, and generally received; not onely by the moſt Reformed Churches, but by the moſt godly and judicious ſervants of God amongſt them; which nevertheleſſe when we came to weigh them in the ballance of the Sanctuarie, we could not find ſufficient warrant in the Word to receive them, and eſtabliſh them here: of one of theſe three kinds will theſe our preſent practiſes appeare to be, which you call our new opinions, or, Innovations here; except it be ſome few of them, which though they have been reported to you to be our Judgements and practiſes, yet are indeed farre from us: The particulars are too many, and too weightie to give you account of them, and the ground of our proceedings about them in a Letter. But to give you (if it be the will of God) the better ſatisfaction, we have ſent you a ſhort Treatiſe touching each particular, that according to your deſire you might underſtand from us how farre we do acknowledge any of theſe tenents, and upon what ground hoping that according to your promiſe, if upon due examination you ſhall find any weight in them, you will give us the right hand of fellowſhip. But if otherwiſe, you will ſend us your juſt and faithfull animadverſions, and we do not ſuſpect your loves to the truth, or your ſincere ſpeaking according to your conſcience in the ſight of God, neither taxe you as a ſide from the truth with by reſpects, whereof you complaine, verily we abhorre ſuch raſh, harſh, and preſumptuous [illegible]ricuſneſſe; we ſee as much cauſe to ſuſpect the integritie of our own hearts, as yours; and ſo much the more, as being more privie to the deceitfulneſſe of our own hearts then to yours. And we cannot but with much thankfulneſſe of heart acknowledge the many rich precious treaſures of his grace, wherewith the Lord hath furniſhed ſundrie of you above your Brethren, which cauſeth us with great reverence to accept, and receive what further light God may be pleaſed to impart unto us by you; But as we have beleeved, ſo have we hitherto practiſed, and ſo have moſt of us ſpoken: this our Anſwer to your particulars, moſt of us we may ſay, becauſe there wants not ſome Brethren amongſt us who proceed further, even to look at all ſet formes of Prayer invented by men of another age or congregation, and preſcribed to their Brethren to be read out of a book for the prayers of the Church, as Images, or Imaginations

of

of men, forbidden in the ſecond Commandement. But as we leave them to their libertie of their own judgements without prejudice, ſo do we alſo concurre with the reſt of them, ſo farre as we all go in bearing witneſſe againſt any ſet formes, or the corruptions in them; In diſpatching whereof, we have been the more ſlow becauſe it behoved us firſt to inquire into, and to ſettle ſome controverſies amongſt our ſelves, before we could well attend to entertaine diſcourſe about forraigne queſtions which do not ſo neerly concerne our preſent eſtate and practiſe. Beſides your Letters being ſent to the Miniſters of the Churches, and ſome of us dwelling farre aſunder, it was not an eaſie thing for all of us often to meet together to conſider of theſe Queſtions, much leſſe to reſolve upon one juſt anſwer. But having at length (by the aſſiſtance of God) brought our Anſwers to this iſſue, we commend it to the bleſſing of the Lord, and in him to your Chriſtian, and judicious conſideration; where if all things be found ſafe, and duely warranted from Scripture grounds; do you alſo as ſeemeth vigilant Watchmen of the Lords flock, and faithfull witneſſes to God; If any thing ſeeme doubtfull to you, conſider and weigh it very well before you reject it: If any thing appeare to be unſound, and diſſonant from the Word (which we for our parts cannot diſcerne) we ſhall willingly attend to what further light God may ſend unto us by you: In the meane while we intreat you in the Lord, not to ſuffer ſuch apprehenſions to lodge in your minds, which you intimate in your Letters; As if we here juſtified the wayes of riged ſeparation, which ſometimes amongſt you we have formerly born witneſſe againſt: and ſo build againe the things we have deſtroyed; you know they ſeparate from your Congregations, as no Churches; from the Ordinances diſpenſed by you as meere Antichriſtian, and from your ſelves as no viſible Chriſtians. But we profeſſe unfainedly, we ſeparate from the corruptions which we conceive to be left in your Churches, and from ſuch Ordinances adminiſtred therein as we feare are not of God, but of men; And for your ſelves, we are ſo farre from ſeparating as from no viſible Chriſtians, as that you are under God in our hearts (if the Lord would ſuffer it) to live and die together; and we looke at ſundrie of you as men of that eminent growth in Chriſtianitie, that if there be any viſible Chriſtians under heaven amongſt you, are the men which for theſe many yeers have been written in your fore-

heads (*Holineſſe to the Lord*) which we ſpeak not to prejudice any truth which our ſelves are here taught and called to profeſſe, but we ſtill beleeve though perſonall Chriſtians may be eminent in their growth of Chriſtianitie: yet Churches had ſtill need to grow from apparent defects to puritie; and from Reformation to Reformation, age after age, till the Lord have utterly aboliſhed Antichriſt with the breath of his mouth, and the brightneſſe of his coming, to the full and cleare revelation of all his holy Truth; eſpecially touching the ordering of his houſe and publick worſhip; as a pledge of this our eſtimation of you, and ſincere affection to you, we have ſent you theſe Anſwers to your demand, and ſhall be readie, by the help of Chriſt, to receive back againe from you, wiſe, and juſt, and holy Advertiſements in the Lord.

Now the Lord God, and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, your Lord, and ours; lead us all unto all Truths, purge out all Leaven out of his Churches, and keep us blameleſſe and harmleſſe in his holy Faith and feare, to his heavenly kingdome, through him that hath loved us; In whom we reſt,

Your very loving Brethren,
the Elders of the Churches
in New-England.

AN

AN ANSVVER OF THE *Elders* of the ſeverall Churches in *New-England*, unto nine *Poſitions* ſent over to them (by divers Reverend and godly Miniſters in ENGLIND) to declare their Judgements therein.

POSITION the I.

That a ſtinted Form of Prayer, or ſet Liturgie, is unlawfull.

Anſw. BEfore we proceed to declare our ſelves concerning this Poſition, it will be needfull that ſome things be premiſed for the explication of the termes thereof; we ſuppoſe that firſt (by a Liturgie and forme of Prayer) you meane not a form of private prayer, compoſed for the helpe of the weaker; but that Siſtome, or Body of Publick Prayer, generally uſed in the Engliſh Pariſhes, compriſed for the Churches uſe by other men, not infallibly guided of God to be ſaid or read out of a book by their Miniſters, as the Churches prayers: And that this is your meaning, may appeare from your Letter it ſelf, wherein you complain, that divers in many parts of that Kingdome have left your Aſſemblies, becauſe of a ſtinted Liturgie; now we know not of any other ſtinted Liturgie from which the people do abſent themſelves, but onely that which is in uſe in the Engliſh Churches; for as for a Form of Prayer in generall, we conceive your meaning cannot be of that, for it is evident that many Preachers conſtantly uſe a ſet form of prayer of their own making before their Sermons, with whom the people refuſe not to joyne.

Secondly, by ſtinted prayers, and ſet formes, you meane ſuch prayers as are ſo impoſed upon the Churches and Miniſters, as that they are limited to the uſe of that very forme of words expreſt in the Book, with no addition, diminution, or alteration; For that Liturgie, & Form amongſt you is in this ſence ſet & ſtinted.

Thirdly, by unlawfull, you meane that we looking at that form as ſwerving from the Rule, neither do firſt practiſe it our ſelves, or ſecondly

secondly, approve the use of it by others.

This being the true state of the Question, so far as it appears to us from your Letters, We answer:

1. For our own practise the Churches here do not use any stinted form of Prayers, and set Liturgies: for these and such other like Reasons.

First, because we find no necessitie of a stinted Liturgie to be used amongst us, by vertue of any Divine precept; And seeing the commission of the Apostle limited them to teach men to observe and do onely what Christ had commanded them in matters of this nature, *Matth.* 28. 20. who are we, and what are our Churches, that we should presume above this Commission? And we hope it will not be offensively taken by any godly Brethren, that we stand fast in that Liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, in this as well as in any other thing.

Secondly, because the unlawfulnesse of set Formes, and stinted Liturgies is questioned, and doubted of by many faithfull servants of Christ; whereas for Church Officers to edifie the Church by their own gifts, as well in praying as in preaching, all sorts without controversie grant it to be lawfull: Now spirituall prudence guideth Beleevers when two wayes are set before them, one doubtfull though ventured on by some; the other certainly safe and good, though neglected by many, to chuse that which is safe, declining from the other.

Thirdly, because the primitive patternes of all the Churches of God in their best times, when as touching this point they keep the rule in their eyes; whether Jewish before Christ, or Christian above an hundred yeers after Christ, yeeld not the least foot steps to shew us another safe way to walke in, then this which we have chosen. As for after times towards the end of the second and beginning of the third Century, we know how farre the Churches were then degenerated, and declined from their first puritie; nor do we marvell at it, seeing in the Apostles time the mystery of iniquitie began to work, and it was then foretold, that the power of godlinesse would in after times be exchanged for empty forms; in which respect we look not at them as our guides, neither in this or other particulars, nor warranted by the Rule: herein following the advise of *Cyprian*, who himselfe saw the corruptions of those times, *Non est attendendum quid aliquis ante nos faciendum putaverit,*

taverit, sed quid qui ante omnes est Christi factum & faciendum præceperit. To conclude, seeing our Christian liberty frees us from binding our selves to any religious observances, whereunto the written Word doth not bind us; And seeing spirituall prudence directs us to chuse those wayes which on all hands are confessed to be safe, avoiding those that are doubtfull and hazardous, and seeing it will not be safe for us needlesly to swerve from the constant practise of all Churches that are recorded in the Scriptures, there held forth as a cloud of witnesses for us to follow in matters of this nature; we therefore, may not, do not, dare not, use that forme of prayer, and stinted Liturgie in those Churches; more particularly in that we do not use that Forme of Prayer and stinted Liturgie which is in use among your selves: this and such other like Reasons have induced us thereunto.

First, the many and just exceptions whereunto that Liturgie is liable for matter and manner: for the proofe whereof, we referre you to those servants of God who have gone before us in witnessing against the same; amongst others, to Dr. *Cartwright*, and the Abridgement.

Secondly, In as much as that Liturgie was never commanded of God, and hath been greatly abused to idolatry and superstition, and is not of any necessarie use, therefore we are afraid to bring it into the worship of God, as knowing (*Exod.* 20) the jealousie of the Lord in matters of this nature, and how strictly he commanded his people, that all monuments of Idolatrie and superstition should be abolished from among them: *Deut.* 5. 25, 26. *Exod.* 13. *Isa.* 30. 32. 2. *Cor.* 6. 17. in which respect the holy Ghost hath greatly commended *Jacob*, *David*, *Jehu*, *Hezekia*, and *Josia*, for taking away the remembrance of such things, (*Gen.* 33. 24. *Psal.* 6. 4. 2. *King.* 20. 26, 27. 18. 4. 2. *King.* 23. all the Chap) and when other Kings of *Judah* came short of the same zeale, the Scripture notes it as a blemish in them, that the high places were not taken away, albeit the people did not sacrifice in them to false gods, but onely to the Lord, 2. *Chron.* 15. 17. and 20. 32. and 32. 17. yea moreover it appeareth by the Scripture that some things that had a good originall and use, if they be not still necessarie and commanded of God, are unlawfull, when once they are known to be defiled by Idolatrie, and abused to it, 1. *King.* 18. 14. *Hos.* 2. 16. 17. As the brazen Serpent was at the first Gods institution,

though but temporarie, but when the children of Israel burnt incense to it, *Hezekiah* is commended for breaking it in peeces: and the Lord witnessed of him, that herein *he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and according to his Commandements which he commanded Moses.* 2. King. 18. 3. 46. How much more in the like case ought other things to be removed which never were commanded of God, but onely were devised by men; And that that Liturgie hath been superstitiously abused, may be cleare to any that shall consider. It is the same for substance that was used in the dayes of Poperie; and therefore when the Papists in *Devonshire*, and *Cornwell* had made a commotion and Rebellion upon the change of Religion in the dayes of King *Edward* the sixth, it was told then by the King, for the pacifying of them, that it was the self-same service in English which had been before in Latine, (it remaineth good in English, for nothing is altered) And Pope *Pius* the fifth did see so little variation in it from the Latine Service, that had been formerly used in that Kingdome, that he would have ratified it by his Authoritie, if Queene *Elizabeth* would have so retained it: And many of the people put such holinesse in it; that they thinke God is not rightly worshipped, nor the Sabbath observed, nor the Sacraments sufficiently administred, if there be no reading of the Service. And others put such holinesse and necessitie in it, that they preferre it before Gods holy ordinances of preaching the Word, in so much as the Ministers are in danger of being called into question, and of being censured, if they do not read the Liturgie every Lords day, without omitting any part thereof, either in respect of preaching, or other wayes: This Argument is used in the abridgement, against Conformitie to the Ceremonies, and we do not see but it is as strong against the Liturgie.

Thirdly, In regard of the many wofull scandalls and dangerous consequences of using that Liturgie, of which, wee suppose, you are not ignorant: to mention but two; first, the hardening of Papists, who are imboldened to thinke better of their owne Breviaries, and Masse-Bookes, seeing most of that Liturgie hath been extracted out of these Bookes, and rather fetched from them, then from the formes used in any parts of the reformed Churches; Secondly, The countenancing and establishing of an unlearned Idoll-Ministery, of not-Preaching-Curates, Non-residents, Pluralists,

ralists, &c. In whose skirts is to be found the bloud of so many thousand soules, living and dying in their sinnes, whilest they ignorantly content themselves with, and harden themselves in some empty formes of Religion and blinde devotion, which are begot and cherished chiefly by such Prayers and Ministery: Neither is there lesse scandall thereby (we meane) not onely taken but given them, by the eating of an Idolothite in the Idolls Temple, condemned by the Apostle, 1 Cor. 8. 7. 10. For if the eating of an Idolothite by him that had knowledge, and knew that an Idoll was nothing, and that all meats were lawfull, did imbolden others to honour the Idoll, and therefore was a scandall given, so also is it in this case.

them

Fourthly, Seeing that Booke is so imposed, as that the Minister in reading of it, is limited to the very words set downe, without any addition, diminution, or alteration, therefore wee dare not use it.

For first the Lord himselfe hath not limited his people to his owne forme, therefore wee see not how it can be lawfull for to be limited to other mens formes; for in thus doing, we should subject our selves to the exercise of such an authoritie and power of the Prelates, as in this case puts forth a stronger Act of limiting power then Christ himselfe, who doth not limit us to those formes which himselfe hath set downe in Scripture; for though wee acknowledge the Lords Prayer, and other formes set downe in Scripture, may be lawfully used as prayers (due cautions being observed) yet there is not a limitation lying upon the Churches, in the use of these prayers; And therefore we doe not finde that the Apostles ever used that forme taught by Christ in those very words, much lesse limited themselves to it when they prayed; nor did they teach the Churches so to doe.

Secondly, If the Lord would not have us limit our selves to our owne formes, whilest we are exercising our owne gifts, which he hath specially sanctified to edifie his Churches, *Act.* 6. 4. *Eph.* 4. 8. 1 *Cor.* 12. 17. Least wee should quench, or at least straighten his Spirit in prayer, 1 *Thes.* 1. 19. Would he not have us then limited to other mens formes, which have not been in like sort sanctified of God, but will rather quench or straighten the Spirit of God, whilest we are so limited to them.

Thirdly, The entertainment of this forme hath been a manifest

For further satisfaction in this point reade Mr. *Cottons* discourse in answer to Mr. *Ball*

snare unto other Churches, who upon the same ground on which they have received this forme into the deske, have been limited to others in the Pulpit, by the means whereof the poore Church of Christ hath been wholly deprived of the publique use of the Ministers gifts in prayer, and the Spirit of prayer in the Ministers in publique hath been greatly restrained.

Secondly, As for our judgements concerning the practise of others, who use this Liturgie in our native Countrey, we have been alwayes unwilling to expresse our minds there against, unlesse wee had been necessarily called thereunto: And at this time we thinke it not expedient to expresse our selves any further concerning this matter, as loath to entermedle in the affaires of other Churches; but contenting our selves with, and blessing the Lord for these Liberties, which wee by the mercy of God doe here enjoy, reserving also due reverence to the judgements of our beloved Countrey-men, who concerning this matter may be otherwise minded.

Position the II.

That it is not lawfull to joyne in prayers, or receive the Sacrament, where a stinted Liturgie is used, or as wee conceive your meaning to be in this as in the former question, viz. *where that stinted Liturgie is used.*

Answ. IT seemes by your Letters, the ground of this your Position hath been the seperation of divers from your Assemblies, because of a stinted Liturgie; And we are not ignorant of that ridged Seperation of divers people, who withdraw themselves from an able faithfull Ministery, as no Ministery of Christ, and from their Congregations, as no Churches of Christ, because of some corruptions, from which through want of light (not love of the truth,) they are not throughly cleansed; against which practice we have ever witnessed: As for our judgements concerning the Position it selfe, wee would premise two things:

First, Concerning the persons reading this Liturgie; which may be either an ungodly, or unable Ministery, or an able and godly.

Secondly, Concerning the Liturgie it selfe, which may be understood,

derstood, either of the whole, or some selected prayers, which may be conceived to be the least offensive.

Now if the Question be of joyning in prayer, where and when that whole Liturgie is used, or when that which is used, is read by an unable and ungodly Minister, wee then see not how it can be lawfull to joyne in prayer in such cases; For the prayers of the Minister are not his private prayers, but the publique prayers of the whole Assembly, whose mouth he is unto God; And when the prayers offered by the Minister, as a living holy acceptable service to God, are not through humane frailtie, but otherwise for matter and manner corrupt, we see not what warrant any man hath to joyne in such prayers, *Act.* 1. 13, 14. When they are joyned therein with an insufficient Ministery, they doe not onely countenance them in their place and office, whom the Lord hath rejected from being his Priests, *Hos.* 14. 6. but also set up those Idolls and *means of worship to edifie themselves by, which God never appointed in his holy Word, *Ezek.* 11. 17.

But if the Question be of joyning in some few selected prayers, read by an able and faithfull Minister out of the Booke; as of the one side wee are tender of imputing sinne to those that so joyne, so on the other side, we are not without feare least such joyning may be found unlawfull; unlesse it may appeare that the Ministers with whom wee have communion in reading those prayers, doe neither give any scandall, by reading of them, nor give unlawfull honour to a thing abused to Idolatry and superstition, nor doe suffer themselves to be sinfully limited in the reading of them.

Position the III.

That the children of godly and approved Christians, are not to be Baptized untill their Parents be set members of a Congregation.

Position the IV.

That the Parents of themselves, though of approved pietie, are not to be received to the Lords Supper, untill they be admitted as set members.

THese two Positions may be maintained with one and the same defence, being somewhat coincident, and therefore wee thus joyne them, as if they were but one.

First, therefore to prevent all mistakes, it may please you to take notice, that we are not of their judgement, who refuse all religious communion with such as are not Church-members, nor doe wee appropriate in this priviledge of the Seales, onely to the members of our owne Church, excluding all other Churches of Christ from the same, though they may be through error or humane frailtie defective in some matters of order; provided that the libertie of our Churches be preserved, of receiving such satisfaction as is meete, as well by Letters of Recommendation from such Churches, as otherwise; if it be requisite concerning those whom wee admit into fellowship in the Seales; for as wee account it our dutie to keepe the unitie of the Spirit inviolate, with any in whom we descerne any fruits of the Spirit; so we hold our selves bound to discharge this dutie according to our spirituall communion, in prayer, holy conference, and other religious actions of like nature, wee maintaine with all godly persons, though they be not in Church-order: But Church-Communion we hold (with Church-admitting to fellowship of the Seales) the knowne, approved, and orderly recommended member of any true Church; But to fellowship in the Censures admittance of members, and choice of officers, onely the members of that particular Church, whereof they and wee, or any of us stand members.

These things being premised to consideration, whereupon our judgements and practise is swaid; for administration of the Seales onely to such as are members, a priviledge peculiar thereunto in ordinary dispensation, *Rom.* 9. 4. *Act.* 2. 41, 42 47. Indeed the Preaching of the Word is not so, being an Ordinance given not onely for the edifying of the Churches already gathered, but also for the gathering of men to the Church that are yet without, whereas the dispencing of the Seales, are an Ordinance given onely for the edifying of the Church; being ordained, not for the gathering of it; And because there is now no Nationall Church on earth wherein the Seales are dispenced, there being neither place nor time, nor Officers, nor Ordinances appointed in the New Testament by Christ the Lord, for any such Assembly as the *Jewes* had under *Moses*: It remaines that the Christian Churches whereunto these priviledges are given, are Congregationall, consisting onely of so many as may and doe meet together ordinarily in one place, for the publique worship of God, and their edifying. Hence

it is

it is that we reade so much in the New Testament of Churches, in the Plurall number; The Churches of Christ, *Rom.* 16. 6. The Churches of God, 1 *Cor.* 11. 16. The Churches of the Saints, 1 *Cor.* 14. 33. And not onely when they were of divers Nations, the Churches of the Gentiles, *Rom.* 16. 12. but also of the same Nation, the Churches of Judea, *Gal.* 1. 20. 1 *Thes.* 2. 14. Not onely when the Countrey was of a large circuite and extent, the Churches of Asia, 1 *Cor.* 16. 19. but also of a small part of the Countrey, the Churches of Gallatia, *Gal.* 1. 2. Yea, when two Congregations in severall Cities are spoken of, they are called Churches, as the Church of Jerusalem, *Act.* 15. 22. and the Church of Antioch, *Act.* 14. 27. & 15. 25. 30. To winde up all, seeing the Churches under the Gospel, are Congregationall, and that Baptisme and the Lords Supper, belongs onely to the Churches, it will follow that as a Citie priviledge belongeth onely to Citizens and their children; so Baptisme and the Lords Supper, being Church-priviledges, belongs onely to the particular Churches, and their seede, and that seeing *Sigillum sequitur donum*, to apply them to others, what is it but to abuse them? As a Seale of a Corporation is abused, when added to confirme the Grant of a priviledge which is peculiar to any Towne Corporation, to one that being no freeman of that Corporation is uncapable thereof.

We are not ignorant of what is wont to be objected against what hath been said, from Instance of the Centurion, the Eunuch, *Lydia*, the Jaylor, &c. How of the Eunuch no more was required to Baptisme, then beleeving with his whole heart; In the Centurion, the Apostle *Peter* upon his being Baptized with the Spirit, inferred his right to Baptisme with water; So in *Lydia*, the Jaylor, and many others; It being the constant expression of the holy Ghost, *They beleeved, and were Baptized*, without any regard to their Church-Estate. *Object.*

Whereunto wee Answer; Where the holy Ghost is given and received (which was the case of the Centurion) and where faith is professed according to Gods Ordinance (which was the case of the rest) there none may hinder them from being Baptized, *viz.* by such as have power to Baptize them: In the Instances given, Baptisme was administred, either by Apostles, or Evangelists, or by ordinary Pastours: The persons Baptized, if they were members of Churches, they had a right to Baptisme in their estate; *Answ.*

And

And the Apostles being Officers of all Churches, might dispence the Seales to them where ever they came, which yet will not warrant ordinary Church-Officers to doe the same; nor is it improbable, but that all these were in Church-order. *Aretus* is of opinion in *Act.* 9. 18. *Act.* 8. 37. that the Centurion had a constituted Church in his house; The Eunuch comming to *Jerusalem* to worship, argueth him to be a Proselyte, and member of the Jewish Church, yet dissolved, and therefore upon profession of the Christian faith, capable of Church-privilledges at that time: As for *Lydia* and the Jaylor, it appeareth that in the beginning of the Gospel, there was a Church at *Philippi*, which communicated with *Paul* concerning giving and receiving, and he expressely sayth before his departure from Macedonia, *Phil.* 4. 18. which departure was immediately upon the Jaylors conversion; In which respect what should hinder that *Lydia* and the Jaylor should first be joyned to the Church, & then to be Baptized, though it be not mentioned in that story, as neither is here mention of a Christian Church, which yet *Paul* mentioneth in his Epistle to the *Philippians*, at least it is probable, that *Lydia* was a member of the Jewish Church, because shee is said to be one that worshipped God; But if any man thinke that they were not members of any Church yet Baptized, though we see not how it will be proved, yet if it were so, the objection doth no whit weaken the Argument, which speaketh of the ordinary dispensation of the Seales, and not what was done in an extraordinary way; So that suppose that in the case alledged, Baptisme was dispenced to some that were not in Church-fellowship, yet the example of the Apostles and Evangelists in so doing, will not warrant ordinary Pastours to doe the like.

The Reason of the difference, why Apostles and Evangelists might administer Baptisme out of Church Order, where of Pastors and Teachers may not is double.

1. *Reas.* First, Because their calling gave them illimited power over all men, especially Christians whereunto they came; But we do not find that ordinarie Pastors and Teachers can do an act of power, but onely over their own Church, which hath called them to watch over them in the Lord.

2. *Reas.* Secondly, Because they were assisted with an immediate direction and guidance of the holy Ghost, in the particulars of their administrations, in the case alledged; But ordinarie Church Officers

ders are to walke according to the ordinarie Rules of the Scriptures in their dispensation of the seals, and not to expect immediate inspiration, and extraordinarie Revelations for their help in such cases: This difference betweene Apostles and ordinarie Church Officers must needs be acknowledged, or otherwise a man might from their examples justifie Baptisme in private places.

If it be objected, that Baptisme (as Circumcision also formerly) is a seale of the righteousnesse of faith, and therefore where faith is, and the righteousnesse of it, the seal may be added also, even to those that are not in Church-Covenant by vertue of their relations to the Covenant of grace to all Beleevers. *Rom.* 4. 11. *Gen.* 17. 1. to 12. *Object.*

We answer: The scope of the Apostle in that place of the *Rom.* 4. is not to define a Sacrament, nor to shew what is the proper adequate subject of the Sacrament: But to prove by the example of *Abraham* that a sinner is justified before God, not by works, but by faith, (thus) as *Abraham* the Father of the faithfull was justified before God, so must his seed be, that is, all beleevers whether Jews or Gentiles, circumcised or uncircumcised, for therefore *Abraham* received Circumcision which belonged to the Jews to confirme that righteousnesse which he had before, even whilest he was uncircumcised, that he might be the Father of both. But lest any man should thinke his Circumcision needlesse, if he was justified by faith before circumcised, he addeth that his Circumcision was of use, as a seale to confirme to him his faith, and the righteousnesse which is by faith; yet as justification is not the onely thing that Circumcision sealed, but the whole Covenant also made with *Abraham* and his seed was sealed thereby: so *Abraham* is to be considered in using Circumcision, not simply, or onely as a Beleever without Church relation, but as confederate, a beleever, and so in the state and order of a visible Church; though the Apostle maketh mention onely of the righteousnesse of faith as sealed thereby, which was as served for his purpose. Now that circumcision sealed the Church-Covenant, may appear from *Gen.* 17. 9, 10, 11. where you may find that *Abraham* & his seed, though beleevers, were not circumcised till God called them into Church-Covenant. There is the same reason and use of Baptisme to us, which serveth to seale to our justification as Circumcision did: *Answ.*

yet not that alone, but also the whole Covenant with all the priviledges, as Adoption, *Act.* 2. 38. and Sanctification, *Gal.* 3. 26. 27. *Tit.* 3. 5. fellowship with Christ in his affliction, *Tit.* 3. 5. and the salvation of our soules; *Matth.* 20. 23. And the resurrection of our bodies, 1. *Pet.* 3. 21. And not onely the Covenant of grace which is common to all beleevers, 1. *Corinth.* 15. 29. But Church-Covenant also which is peculiar to confederates, according to that of the Apostle, *By one Spirit We are all baptised into one body*, 1. *Cor.* 2. 13. And by one Body, he meaneth that particular Church of *Corinth*; whereunto he writeth, and saith, *Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular*; *ver.* 17. And therefore Church membership is required as well to the orderly partaking of Baptisme, as it was of Circumcision: nor do we find that Circumcision was administred to all that were in the Covenant of grace (as all beleevers were) but onely to such, of them as were joyned to the people of the God of *Abraham*. *Melchisedech* was under the covenant of grace, so was *Lot*, and *Job*, and his foure friends, yet we no where read that they were circumcised, nor do beleeve they were: so that if Circumcision were administred to none but those that were joyned to *Abrahams* familie, and the Church of God in his seed, then may not Baptisme in ordinarie course be administred to any beleevers now, unlesse they be joyned to the Church of Christ: For, *Par pari par est ratio*; But the first is true, therefore the second also.

Object. If any shall say, that a man may be a member of a visible Catholick Church, that stands in no relation to any particular Congregation.

Answ. We answer, as we have alreadie said, we know no such Church in the New Testament, as a visible Catholick Church, wherein the seales are to be dispenced: if any man think otherwise, and will undertake to prove it from Scripture grounds, we shall gladly weigh his Argument, and returne such answer as the case will beare.

Secondly, the Ministers of *Scotland* in their examination, and re-examination of the Articles of *Perth*, in the last Article touching the administration of the Sacraments in private places, do expresse their Judgements in such termes, as may serve for a full answer to this Objection.

Visible communion (say they) in the holy things of God is the end

end of our union, and consolation of a particular Church: because we cannot attaine to visible communion in the holy things of God immediately, but by our communion with a particular Congregation, this communion must not be violated.

The second consideration, the ordinarie administration of the seales is limited to the Ministery, and the Ministery to a particular Church; therefore the seals also must necessarily be proper to the Church, and to the members thereof.

Thirdly, that the administration of the seals is limited to the Minister, is evident from the first Institution, where God hath joyned to preach, *viz.* by office, and to baptise together; therefore we may not separate them: for howsoever any one man may by the appointment of the Lord, and master of the family, signifie his mind, and deliver a message from him to the familie, yet the dispensing of a fit portion of food to every one of the household, is a branch of the Stewards office. Indeed the keyes are given to the whole Church, yet the exercise and dispensation of them in this as well as in other particulars is committed to the Ministers, who are called to be stewards of the mysteries of God, 1. *Cor.* 4. 1. And no Church-office can be orderly performed by any, but such as are called thereunto; nor will God vouchsafe his presence and blessing whereupon all spirituall efficacie depends, in an ordinance, but when it is dispensed by such whom he hath ordained and appointed thereunto.

Secondly, that the Minister is limited to the Church, appeareth from evident Texts of Scripture, *Act.* 14. 23. so also upon this ground, 1. *Cor.* 4. 17. 1. *Pet.* 5. 2. *Act.* 20. 28. The office is founded in the relation betweene the Church and the officer: wherefore take away the relation, and the office (and so the work) ceaseth; for where he hath no power, there he may not do any act of power, and he hath no power where he hath no relation by office: herein the proportion holds betweene an Officer of a Towne Corporate, and of a Church, that as the power of the former is onely within his owne corporation; so the power of the latter is confined to his own congregation.

The third Consideration: Circumcision and the Passeover onely are to be administred to the members of the Church, therefore Baptisme, and the Lords Supper is to be administred also, &c. The consequence is made good by the parities of these ordinances: for

if the Argument hold strong for the proofe of *Paedo-baptisane*, which is taken from the circumcision of infants, why may we not as well infer a necessitie of Church-membership to baptisme from the necessitie of it to circumcision? And that Circumcision was peculiar to the members of the Church, may appeare in that persons circumcised, and they onely might eat the Passeover, and they might enter into the Temple, which was the priviledge of Church-members.

In our answer to the second Objection against the first Consideration, we have shewed you that Circumcision was not administred to all that were under the Covenant of grace, (which all beleevers were) but onely to such of them as joyned themselves to the Church: As first in *Abrahams* family, whereunto Baptisme doth so farre answer, that the Apostle accounteth these expressions equivolent: *Col.* 2. 12. to be circumcised in Christ with circumcision made with hands, and to be buried with Christ in Baptisme, indeed in some things they differ: as onely the males were circumcised, whereas also with us females are baptised; the reason is, because God hath limited circumcision to the males, but under the Gospel that difference is taken away.

Againe, Circumcision was administred in the private familie, but Baptisme onely in the publick Assemblies of the Church. The Reason of this difference is, because they were bound to circumcise the males on the eighth day, but that would not stand with going to the Temple, which was too farre off for the people to bring their children from all the parts of *Judea* to be circumcised on the eighth day: nor had they alwayes opportunitie of a solemne Convention in their Synagogues on every eighth day when some child or other might be brought to be circumcised. But there is no precise day set down for Baptisme; nor are opportunities of publique Assemblies so remote when Churches are gathered in a congregationall frame; but that every first day of the week Baptisme may be administred if it be required. Againe for the aforesaid Reason circumcision required not a particular Minister, for ought we find in the Scriptures, but it is not so in Baptisme, as hath been shewed in the second Consideration: But no good reason may be given why in this they should not both agree, (*viz.*) that they are both to be dispensed onely to members of the visible Church, it hath been proved in the first Consideration.

They

They that are not capable of Church censures; are not capable of Church-priviledges; But they that are not within Church-Covenant, are not capable of Church-censures; *Ergo*. 4 *Consid*

The Proposition is evident; the Assumption may be proved, 1 *Cor*. 5. 12. *What have I to doe to judge them that are without*: Now to be without is not onely the case of Heathens, and Excommunicants, but of some beleevers also: who though by internall union with Christ, they are within the Covenant of grace, yet being not externally joyned to the visible body of Christ, (a particular Church) are in regard of a visible Church-communion said to be without: to this purpose is that Text alledged by other Divines also, as Doctor *Ames*.

Wee may adde hereunto for a fift Consideration, the evill and pernicious consequences of extending Communion in Church-priviledges beyond the bond of Church-fellowship: for thus; 5 *Consid*.

First, the extraordinary office of Apostles, and the ordinary office of Pastours and Teachers, will be much confounded, if the latter be as illimited as the former in the execution of their office, beyond the bounds of their owne particular Churches.

Secondly, The second distinction of Church-Assemblies from the confused multitudes is abrogated; if without membership in a particular Church, the Parents may Communicate with the Church in the Lords Supper, and their seede in Baptisme.

Thirdly, The Church shall indanger the prophaning of the Seales, and want one speciall means whereby the grace and pietie of men may be discerned and made knowne, for if without respect to their Church-estate, men of approved pietie, as you say, are to be admitted to fellowship in the Seales; how shall their pietie be approved to the Church, not by their owne report of themselves alone, without the attestation of such as are approved by the Church? And how can such beare witnes to their approved pietie, who against light refuse to professe subjection to the Gospel of Christ, by orderly joyning themselves with fellowship to some approved Church of Christ, as members thereof, when they have opportunitie thereunto? Seeing such Church-fellowship is an action of true pietie required of all beleevers in the second Commandement; and true pietie frameth mens spirits to have respect to all Gods Commandements; and we have had much experience of it; that men of approved pietie in the judgements of some, have

been found too light, not onely in the judgement of others, but also in their owne consciences, when they have come to the tryall in offering themselves to be members of Churches: with such a blessing hath God followed this Ordinance of taking hold of Church-Covenant, by publique profession of faith and repentance, before men be admitted to the Seales: But this means of discovery of mens pietie and sinceritie, would be wholly left, if men should be admitted to the Lords Table, without entering into Church-fellowship.

6 *Consid.* None have power to dispence the Seales but those that are called to the office of the Ministery, and no man can be so called till first there be a Church to call him: Seeing the power of calling Ministers is given by Christ to the Church; and then it followes, that all those who desired to partake in the Seales, are bound to joyne themselves together in the Church state, that so they may call a Minister to dispence the Seales unto them. And seeing this dutie by the appointment of Gods Law, is not onely upon some Christians, but equally upon all, therefore no Christian can expect by the appointment of God, to partake in the Seales till he hath joyned himselfe in Church-fellowship, and in the call of the Ministery. And indeed seeing in a Church, a Minister called by the Church, is of such necessitie for dispencing of the Seales, it may seeme unreasonable that Christians should be bound to become a Church, and to call a Minister, that so the Seales may be dispenced, and other men (when this is done) may ~~not~~ have equall libertie to the Seals, which refuse to joyne unto the Church. In consideration that our practise may not be censured, as novell and singular, give us leave to produce a president of the like case observed and approved by publique Countenance in the dayes of *Edward* the Sixt (of blessed and famous memory) who in the yeare 1550. granted *Johannes a Lasco*, a learned Nobleman of *Poland*, and under the Broad Seale of *England*, got libertie to gather a Church of strangers in *London*, and to order themselves according as they should finde to be according to the Scriptures. Amongst other godly orders established in the Church that wch concerned the Administration of Baptisme, to prevent the prophaning of it, (wee will report in *Alasco* his owne words) *Baptisme in Churches*, saith he, *is administred in the publique Assembly of the Church, after the publique Sermon; For seeing Baptisme doth so belong to the whole Church, that none*

none ought to be driven backe which is a member of the Church, nor to be admitted to it which is not a member of it; truely it is equall that they ſhould be performed publiquely in the Aſſembly of the whole Church, which belongeth to the whole Church in common. Againe he addeth; *Many ſeeing our Churches are (by Gods bleſſing) ſo eſtabliſhed by the Kings Majeſtie, that they may be, as it were, a Pariſh of ſtrangers, diſperſed throughout the Citie, or a body Corporate* (as it is called in the Kings Graunt) *and yet all ſtrangers doe not joyne themſelves to our Churches; yea, there are thoſe whileſt they avoyd all Churches, will pretend to the Engliſh Church, that they are joyned with us: and to us, that they are joyned to the Engliſh Churches, and ſo doe abuſe both them and us; Leaſt the Engliſh Churches and the Miniſters thereof ſhould be deceived by the impoſtures of ſuch men, and that under colour of our Churches, wee doe Baptize their Infants alone, who have joyned themſelves to our Churches by publique confeſſion of their Faith, and obſervatton of the Eccleſiaſticall diſcipline. And that our Church may be certaine that the Infants that are to be Baptized, are their ſeede who have joyned themſelves in manner aforeſaid, the Father of the Infant to be Baptized (if poſſible he can) or other men or women of notable credit in the Church, doe offer them to Baptiſme, and doe publique profeſſe, that it is the ſeede of the Church, and that wee ſuffer no ſtrangers to offer Infants to Baptiſme in our Churches, who hath not made publique profeſſion of his Faith, and willingly ſubmitted himſelfe to the diſcipline of our Churches; Leaſt otherwiſe they who preſent the children to Baptiſme, might in time plead that they belong to other Churches, and ſo ſhould deceive the Engliſh Churches and their Miniſters.*

To thoſe that preſented Infants to Baptiſme, they propounded three queſtions; The firſt was, *Are theſe Infants which you offer the ſeede of our Church, that they may lawfully here be baptized by our Miniſtery.*

Anſwer, *Yea*; This Inſtance is the more to be regarded, becauſe *Alaſco* affirmeth in the Preface to that booke, that this libertie was by the King graunted to them, out of his deſire to ſettle a like reformation in the *Engliſh* Churches, which is in effect you ſee the ſame with our practiſe in this particular.

POSITION

Position the V.

That the power of Excommunication, &c. is so in the Bodie of the Church, that what the major part shall allow, that must be done, though the Pastours and Governours, and part of their Assembly be of another minde, and peradventure upon more substantiall Reasons.

Answ. If the Question had been, whether the power of Excommunication lyes in the body of the Congregation, consisting of Officers and members? Our Answer should be Affirmative, and according hereunto also is our practise, and wee hope your judgements and ours are not different herein; But seeing the Question is, whether it is so in the Body of the Congregation, that what the *Major* part shall allow that must be done, though the Pastours and Governours, and part of the Assembly, doe dissent upon more substantiall Reasons.

Our Answer is Negative, *viz.* that the power of Excommunication is not sealed in the Congregation, neither ought it to be in any of the Churches of the Lord Jesus, who ought not to carry matters by number of votes against God, as this Position implyeth, but by strength of rule and reason according to God. The power of the Apostles themselves was not to doe things against truth, but for the truth, 2 *Cor.* 13. 8. and not for destruction, but for edification, 2 *Cor.* 10. 8. And the same may be said concerning the power which God hath given to you, and if any Church amongst us have swarved from this Rule, which is more then we know, we doe not allow them in such a practice, but should be ready as the Lord should help to convince them of their sinne therein.

Position the VI.

That none are to be admitted as set Members, but they must promise not to depart or remove, unlesse the Congregation will give leave.

OUr Answer hereunto is briefly this, Wee judge it were expedient, and most according to Rule, that such Brethren as are in Covenant with the Church, and our selves as fellow-members, and

and have committed their soules to us as Ministers, should not forsake our fellowship, nor abruptly breake away from us, when, and whether they please: But first approve themselves therein to their brethrens consciences, and their counsell in so weightie a matter: For which wee propound to your consideration these two Reasons following.

The former is drawne from the nature of the Church-Covenant, and confession in these foure particulars. 1. *Reas.*

First, Every member at his admission doth openly professe, and solemnly promise, that by Christs helpe assisting, he will not onely in generall give up himselfe as to the Lord, to be guided by him, so to the Church according to God, to be directed by them (which is no more then the members of the Church of *Macedonia* did, 2 *Cor.* 8. 5. in a parallell case) but also in particulars, that he will performe all duties of Brotherly love and faithfulnesse to all the members of the Body, as of diligent watchfulnesse over all his brethren, throughly to prevent sinne; so of faithfull admonition after their falls, to regaine them to the Lord from their sinne: therefore men are injoyned hereunto, & that deeply condemned in *Cain* that he would not doe that dutie of being his Brothers keeper, *Levit.* 19. 17. and by Christ himselfe, *Mat.* 18. 15. and by *Paul* also, *Gal.* 6. 1.

Secondly, Those ingagements named, are not made onely by the members admitted to the Church, but by the Church backe againe to the members; So that thereby the whole Church in generall, and every member in particular, stands as well in conscience bound to performe all duties of love and watchfulnesse to him, as he doth to them. And this wee doe according to the golden Rule of love and equitie enjoyned by our Saviour, *Mat.* 7. 12. fearing the contrary practise of Scribes and Pharisees, so much condemned by Christ, of laying greater burdens on others then we our selves are willing to undergoe, *Mat.* 23. 4.

Thirdly, These promises they are lawfully and mutually made, that members (as also the whole Church) are bound not onely every one for himselfe actually to performe them, but passively also to suffer his Brethren to doe these offices upon and towards himselfe; if he neglect his former, he shall falsifie his Covenant, before God, Angells, and men made, and so not onely breake promise to his Brethren, contrary to *Psal.* 15. 4. but also in some sort commit

the sinne of *Ananias* and *Saphira*, in lying to the holy Ghost, condemned and punished secretly by Gods own hand, *Act.* 5. 3. 10. If he failes in the latter, he shall not onely be guiltie of the same sinne of the breach of Covenant with God and man, as in the former, but shall adde unto it this folly of despising counsell so much commended, *Prov.* 12. 15. 1. 7. And shall also proclaime this his folly and pride, by shewing to all the Church that he is wise in his own eyes, and leane unto his own wisedome, both reproved, *Prov.* 3. 7. 13. 4. Seeing need of no further light to be held forth by his brethren, then what he apprehends himself, which is one of the greatest properties of folly it self.

From all these things premised, it appeares we can do no lesse (and yet we do no more) then require a Member before he depart according to our Covenant, thus lawfully, deliberately, and mutually made, to expresse to his Brethren his desire of departing; and the place and societie to which he tends, whether to a godly Church where he may be further edified, or to some corrupt Assembly where he may be destroyed. And secondly, his grounds and Reasons which move him so to do, which if they hold good, being scanned by the Word, he may not onely be confirmed in his way by the consent and advise of many, but counselled also how to manage his departure for his best comfort: and so after all solemnitie with the whole Churches prayers, and blessing in the name of Christ dismissed. But if his grounds be either none at all, or weake, or sinfull, and that his desire of departing savours of self-will, inordinate love of gaine, rash precipitancie, or a spirit of Schisme, more strongly then of sound Reason: Then what can we, what dare we, do lesse without breach of Covenant, then in love and tendernesse, shew him his weaknesse, dissuade him from his purpose, and refuse to consent? Yet if after all this, we see his spirit stedfastly and stiffely bent for a departure, then, though we dare not act against our light by consenting or counselling, yet if his sinne be apparent, and danger eminent, we use rather through indulgence (in cases of like nature) to suspend our Vote against him, as not willing against his will to detaine him, abhorring to make our Churches places of Restraint and imprisonment.

Object. But if any man should object, that this Argument holds firme, where this our Church-Covenant is allowed to be lawfull, but with some it is questioned. Some

Some indeed have questioned the necessitie of the Church-Covenant, but we hope our Reverend Brethren that we write unto do not question the lawfulnesse of such a Covenant, being nothing else for the matter of it, but a promise of doing such Christian duties, as the Gospel of Christ requires of all Saints in Church state: For as we do not hereby promise to performe any new duty to our Brethren which was not before commanded us of the Lord, but onely review and renew our purpose afresh, performing such duties to that particular Body into which we are there to be incorporated, as were before injoyned in the Word; as to love each other, and to watch over each other (out of love) for their good, to be readie to give counsell to, and take counsell from each other, to prevent sinne in them, or gaine them from sin, all which are plentifully and frequently held forth in the Scriptures: for the defect of which care and watchfulnesse, all the Body shall be wrapped in the same guilt and punishment with the members that commit the sinne, as the whole Church of Israel was in *Achans* sin and punishment. *Answ.*

Secondly, Its a thing very seasonable, and a knowne fundamentall rule in all Societies, that he that is incorporate thereunto, and so participates of the priviledges thereof, should ingage himselfe to conforme to all such lawfull rights and orders as are expedient for the well being of the Society, the contrary whereunto will be a thing injurious to him to offer, and confusion to themselves to accept.

A second Ground, is drawne from the necessarie Ruine that may fall upon the Body, if every particular member should depart at his own pleasure; for as every Societie, so much more a Church of Saints, both from principles of Nature, and Christianity also, not onely lawfully may, but in duty are bound, to indeavour the preservation of it self: And therefore timely to foresee, and wisely to prevent all such things, as would bring destruction to it self. Now if any member might when and wherefore he please, without consent of the Church depart away from it, this may by unavoidable consequence destroy the whole: For if one man may so depart, why may not another also, though never so usefull in that Body, whose absence might much change the well being of it: and if one, why not 2. 6. 10. 12. as well as one? for where will you stop, seeing all may plead the same libertie? and if members *2. Ground.*

may so do, why may not the Pastor and Teacher also, seeing they are tyed to him by the same relation that he is to them? And so the principall falling, the whole building must fall down. And if that may be so in one Church, why not in all? and so Christ should have no certain setled Church on earth.

Position the VII.

That a Minister is so a Minister to a particular Congregation, that if they dislike him unjustly, or leave him, he ceaseth to be a Minister.

OVr Answer to this consists in two branches.

First, in case a Minister be set aside by the Church, meerly through his own default. Secondly, by the Churches fault, without any desert of his. In the former case, it is evident he ceaseth to be a Minister to them any longer, as appeares in foure conclusions.

First, It is cleare from the Word, that a Pastor, or a Teacher in these dayes hath no Apostolicall power over all Churches, but onely limited to that one Church where God hath set him. *Paul* gives the Elders at *Ephesus* not a generall commission to go to teach all Churches, but to feed one flock, in which the holy Ghost hath made them Over-seers. *Act.* 20. 28. So *Peter* gives direction to Elders, to feed that flock of God onely which was amongst them, and to take the over-sight thereof. 1. *Pet.* 5. 2.

Secondly, It is as cleare, that all this power of feeding which the Minister hath in that church, is nextly derived to him from Christ, by the Church who hath solemnly called him to the worke, and promised to obey him therein; for if he hath it else-where, it must be either from Christ himself immediately, or from some others deputed by Christ to conferre it on him; or he must take it up himselfe. Not the first, for that was proper to the Apostles, or Apostolicall men: therefore *Paul* proving his Apostleship, saith, he *was called not of men, nor by men, but by Jesus Christ himselfe*, Gal. 1. 1. Not the second, for we never read in Gods Word of any ordinarie Officers, or others besides the Church, that had any Commission given them from Christ to call Ministers unto Churches;

Not

Not the third, for no man taketh this honour, (*viz.*) of a Priest, but he that is called of God, *Heb.* 5. 4. Therefore it must needs be from Christ by the Church.

Thirdly, as that Church in the name of Christ gave this power to a Minister, to be what he is, and to do what he doth amongst them; when such a Minister shall make and manifest himselfe apparently unworthy and unfit to discharge the place which they thus called him unto; so that they may discerne that Christ the head of the Church hath refused him, from being a Minister unto him; they may then upon as good grounds depose him from it, as they called him to it.

Fourthly, when a Church hath thus in Christs name put forth this power, of shutting, as before they did of opening to a Minister, then he must cease to be a Minister to them any more: For we have no such indeliable character imprinted upon a Minister, that he must needs be so for ever, because he once was so: his ministery ceasing, the Minister ceaseth also.

But secondly, In case the Church shall without cause, or a sufficient weightie cause, rashly or wilfully set him aside, whom Christ hath set over them; and whom they so solemnely called, and promised before the Lord to submit unto; and so abuse their power given them by Christ: It is doubtlesse a very great wrong unto the Minister, and sinne against Christ himself, before whom it was done; and not onely Christ himselfe will take it ill at their hands, for such contempt done to him in his Ministers (according to Christs speech, *Luk.* 10. 16. *He that rejecteth you, rejecteth me*: and Gods speech, 1. *Sam.* 8. 7. *They have not cast off thee, but cast off me.*) But even other Churches also may admonish them for it; and if they prove obstinate therein, withdraw the right hand of fellowship from them. And concerning the Minister himself thus deposed, seeing it is done not by Christ, but by the Church without Christ, yea against the mind of Christ, we conceive though he be by them deprived of the execution of his Ministery amongst them, yet untill he accepts of a call to another people, he still remaines a Minister of Christ, in whose account (notwithstanding such a deposition) he hath true right of Administration amongst the people.

Position the VIII.

That a Minister cannot perform any ministeriall Act in another Congregation.

Answ. IF you take (ministeriall act) improperly, as sometimes it is taken by some, onely when the Minister of one Church doth exercise his gifts of praying, and preaching in another Church, being by themselves so desired: Then we answer in this sence, a Minister of one Church may do a ministeriall act in another, which he doth not perform by vertue of any office, but onely by his gift. And thus upon any occasion we mutually performe these acts, one in anothers Churches. But if you meane (by ministeriall act) such an act of authoritie, and power in dispensing of Gods ordinance, as a Minister doth perform it to the Church, whereunto he is called to be a Minister; then we deny that he can so perform any ministeriall act, to any other Church but his own; because his office extends no further then his call. For that solemne charge in *Act.* 20. 28. is not to feed all flocks, but that flock onely over which the holy Ghost hath made them over-seers: If that Question were propounded to any Minister, so exercising in another Church, which was once to our Saviour by the chief Priests and Elders [*By what power doest thou these things, and who gave thee this authoritie?*] let that Minister, whosoever he be, study how to make an answer.

Position the IX.

That Members in one Congregation may not communicate in another.

Answ. THis Question (as the other) needs no long Answer, being altogether through misreport mistaken; for members of other Churches well known and approved, by vertue of communion of Churches, do mutually, and without exceptions communicate each of them at others Churches: even so often as Gods providence leads them thereunto, and themselves desire it.

FINIS.